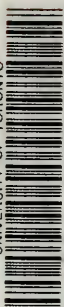


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A  
SHORT AND EASY METHOD  
WITH THE  
**DEISTS;**

WHEREIN THE CERTAINTY OF THE  
**CHRISTIAN RELIGION**

*Is demonstrated by INFALLIBLE PROOF, from  
FOUR RULES, which are incompatible to any IMPOS-  
TURE that ever yet has been, or can possibly be.*

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

BY THE LATE

**REV. CHARLES LESLIE, M.A.**

WITH A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO A DEIST,  
UPON HIS CONVERSION BY READING HIS BOOK.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

**A PREFACE,**

BY THE **REV. W. JONES, M.A.**

AUTHOR OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, &c.

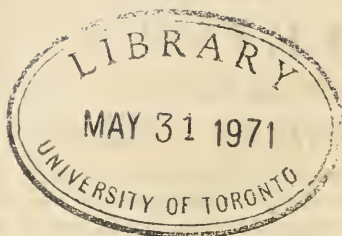
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# A PREFACE

TO

MR. LESLIE'S

SHORT METHOD WITH THE DEISTS.

*MANY attempts having lately been made upon the people of England, to seduce them from the Christian Faith, and to lead them into destruction, temporal and eternal; something should be done to secure them against profligate writers, the declared apostles of atheism. I therefore rejoice to find, that the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, have resolved to print and disperse Mr. LESLIE'S Short Method with the Deists, together with its sequel, entitled, The Truth of Christianity demonstrated. The world affords nothing so effectual on the Christian evidences; and I pray God to give his blessing to their pious endeavours, by opening the hearts of those who are in error to receive the light of truth: and it is here so represented to them, that they will receive it, unless a spirit of infatuation is gone forth amongst them; which, may God Almighty avert!*

*In the former of these Tracts, the argument is so short and clear, that the meanest capacity may understand it ; and so forcible, that no man has yet been found able to resist it. When it was first published, some attempts were made ; but they soon came to nothing. The argument in brief is this. The Christian Religion consists of facts and doctrines, each depending on the other ; so that if the facts are true, the doctrines, must be true. Thus, for example ; the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact : our resurrection is a doctrine. Admit the fact ; and the doctrine cannot be denied. The ascension of Jesus Christ is another fact : his return from thence to judge the world is a doctrine : if the fact be true, the doctrine must be so likewise. For, argues the apostle, if the doctrine be not true, the fact must be false ; if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised.*

*The truth of a matter of fact may be certainly known, if it be attended with certain marks, such as no false fact can possibly have. These marks are four. It is required, first, that the fact be a sensible fact, such as men's outward senses can judge of ; secondly, that it be notorious, performed publicly in the presence of witnesses ; thirdly, that there be memorials of it, or monuments and actions kept up in memory of it ; fourthly, that such monuments and actions begin with the fact. It is the design of Mr. Leslie's book to shew, how these four marks*

marks do all meet in the facts of Christianity. And to the four marks, which any true fact may have, he has added four more, in his second tract, which are peculiar to the facts of Christianity.

Every reader, to whom the Short Method is new, will be induced to think more highly of it, if I tell him its history; as I received it from Doctor Delany, Dean of Down, in Ireland; who told me he had it from Captain Leslie, a son of the Author. It was the fortune of Mr. Leslie to be acquainted with the Duke of Leeds of that time; who observed to him, that although he was a believer of the Christian Religion, he was not satisfied with the common methods of proving it: that the argument was long and complicated; so that some had neither leisure nor patience to follow it, and others were not able to comprehend it: that as it was the nature of all truth to be plain and simple; if Christianity were a truth, there must be some short way of shewing it to be so; and he wished Mr. Leslie would think of it. Such a hint to such a man, in the space of three days, produced a rough draught of the Short and Easy Method with the Deists; which he presented to the Duke; who looked it over, and then said, "I thought I was a Christian before, but I am sure of it now: and as I am indebted to you for converting me, I shall henceforth look upon you as my spiritual father." And he acted accordingly; for he never came into

*his company afterwards without asking his blessing. Such is the story : very nearly as Dr. Delany himself would tell it, if he were now alive. The circumstances are so memorable, that there must have been something very extraordinary at the bottom to account for them. And so thought Dr. Middleton ; though the work affected him in a very different manner. Feeling how necessary it was to his principles, that he should some way rid himself of Mr. Leslie's argument, he looked out for some false fact, to which the four marks might be applied : and this he did for twenty years together, without being able to find one. This I learned from the late Dr. Berkeley, son to the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne ; who conversed much with the world, and I believe would not have reported such a thing, but upon good authority. I may mention another event, which ought not to be forgotten, upon this occasion. An anecdote it is not ; because it must be already known to the public. Dr. Priestley, that unaccountable man, like the Quaker, who went over to Constantinople to convert the Grand Seignior, wrote and printed a letter to the infidels of France, with a view of bringing them back to Christianity : in which letter he gives them Mr. Leslie's argument, as if it had been his own ; for he says not a word of the author. The world looks upon the doctor as one of the false apostles of the age : but if he had been a true apostle, and could work miracles, what reason*



*reason have we to think that they would have more effect upon the French, than miracles had upon the Jews? This world is the god of the French, as it was of the Jews; and its power to blind the eyes is as great now as it was then. Besides, the argument had been published in France long before the time of Dr. Priestley, and is to be found in the Oeuvres de St. Real, a collection of small pieces on the Evidence of the Christian Religion.*

*To those who take Mr. Leslie's tracts into their hands, I have only this short advice to give. I beseech them to remember, that if Christianity be true, it is tremendously true. All the great things this world can shew are as nothing in comparison of it. Heaven and Hell are the issue. Its facts yet to come are as certain as those that are past. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised—the heavens shall be on fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat—the angels shall gather the elect of God from the four winds—all men shall be called upon to give an account of their words and actions—and they who now deny Jesus Christ, and hold him in defiance, shall see the heaven and earth fly away before his face. A man must be stupified if he can think on these things without fleeing from the wrath to come: and there is no way but in the belief of Christianity, which this book teaches.*

*I feel myself so deeply interested in this design of the Society, that I wish them all the aid and encouragement which Heaven and Earth can give them; and am their faithful Friend,*

*And devoted humble Servant,*

*WILLIAM JONES.*

NAYLAND,

Feb. 23, 1799.



A

SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH THE

DEISTS.

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SIR,

I. **I**N answer to yours of the third instant, I much condole with you your unhappy circumstances, of being placed amongst such company, where as you say, you continually hear the sacred Scriptures, and the histories therein contained, particularly of Moses, and of Christ, and all revealed religion, turned into ridicule, by men who set up for sense and reason. And they say that there is no greater ground to believe in Christ, than in Mahomet; that all these pretences to revelation are cheats, and ever have been among Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians; that they are all alike impositions of cunning and designing men, upon the credulity, at first, of simple and unthinking people, till, their numbers increasing, their delu-

sions grew popular, came at last to be established by laws; and then the force of education and custom gives a bias to the judgments of after ages, till such deceits come really to be believed, being received upon trust from the ages foregoing, without examining into the original and bottom of them. Which these our modern men of sense, (as they desire to be esteemed,) say that they only do, that they only have their judgments freed from the slavish authority of precedents and laws, in matters of truth, which, they say, ought only to be decided by reason; though by a prudent compliance with popularity and laws, they preserve themselves from outrage, and legal penalties; for none of their completion are addicted to sufferings or martyrdom.

Now, Sir, that which you desire from me, is some short topic of reason, if such can be found, whereby, without running to authorities, and the intricate mazes of learning, which breed long disputes, and which these men of reason deny by wholesale, though they can give no reason for it, only suppose that authors have been trumped upon us, interpolated and corrupted, so that no stress can be laid upon them, though it cannot be shewn wherein they are so corrupted; which, in reason, ought to lie upon them to prove who alledge it; otherwise it  
is

is not only a precarious, but a guilty plea : and the more, that they refrain not to quote books on their side, for whose authority there are no better, or not so good grounds. However, you say, it makes your disputes endless, and they go away with noise and clamour, and a boast, that there is nothing, at least nothing certain, to be said on the Christian side. Therefore you are desirous to find some one topic of reason, which should demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, and at the same time distinguish it from the impostures of Mahomet, and the old Pagan world ; that our Deists may be brought to this test, and be obliged either to renounce their reason, and the common reason of mankind, or to submit to the clear proof, from reason, of the Christian religion ; which must be such a proof, as no imposture can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the Christian religion not to be an imposture. And, whether such a proof, one single proof (to avoid confusion) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a proof, because every truth is in itself clear, and one ; and therefore that one reason for it, if it be the true reason, must be sufficient, and if sufficient, it is better than many ; for multiplicity confounds, especially to weak judgments.

Sir, you have imposed an hard task upon me, I wish I could perform it. For though every truth is one, yet our fight is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it directly, but by many inferences, and laying of things together.

But I think, that in the case before us, there is such a proof as you require, and I will set it down as short and plain as I can.

II. First, then, I suppose, that the truth of the doctrine of Christ will be sufficiently evinced, if the matters of fact, which are recorded of him in the Gospels, be true: for his miracles, if true, do vouch the truth of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to Moses. If he brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea in that miraculous manner which is related in Exodus, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from God: these being the strongest proofs we can desire, and which every Deist will confess he would acquiesce in, if he saw them with his eyes. Therefore the stress of this cause will depend upon the proof of these matters of fact.

I. And the method I will take, is, first, to lay down such rules, as to the truth of matters of fact in general, that where they all meet, such matters of fact cannot be false. And then, secondly, to shew that all these rules do meet in  
the

the matters of fact, of Moses, and of Christ; and that they do not meet in the matters of fact of Mahomet, and the heathen deities, or can possibly meet in any imposture whatsoever.

2. The rules are these: 1st. That the matters of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it. 2. That it be done publicly in the face of the world. 3. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed. 4. That such monuments, and such actions or observances, be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

3. The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men, at the time when such matter of fact was said to be done, because every man's eyes and senses would contradict it. For example: suppose any man should pretend, that yesterday he divided the Thames, in presence of all the people of London, and carried the whole city, men, women, and children, over to Southwark, on dry land, the waters standing like walls on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could persuade the people of London that this was true, when every man, woman, and child could contradict him, and say, that this was a notorious falsehood, for that they had not  
seen



seen the Thames so divided, or had gone over on dry land. Therefore I take it for granted (and I suppose, with the allowance of all the Deists in the world) that no such imposition could be put upon men, at the time when such public matter of fact was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such matter of fact might be invented some time after, when the men of that generation wherein the thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the credulity of after ages might be imposed upon, to believe that things were done in former ages, which were not.

And for this, the two last rules secure us as much as the two first rules, in the former case; for whenever such a matter of fact came to be invented, if not only monuments were said to remain of it, but likewise that public actions and observances were constantly used ever since the matter of fact was said to be done, the deceit must be detected, by no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every man, woman, and child, who must know that no such actions or observances were ever used by them. For example: suppose I should now invent a story of such a thing done a thousand years ago, I might perhaps get some to believe it; but if I say, that not only such a thing was done, but that, from that day to this, every man, at the  
age

age of twelve years, had a joint of his little finger cut off; and that every man in the nation did want a joint of such a finger; and that this institution was said to be part of the matter of fact done so many years ago, and vouched as a proof and confirmation of it, and as having descended, without interruption, and been constantly practised, in memory of such matter of fact, all along, from the time that such matter of fact was done: I say it is impossible I should be believed in such a case, because every one could contradict me, as to the mark of cutting off a joint of the finger; and that being part of my original matter of fact, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the second point, to shew that the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ, have all these rules or marks before mentioned; and that neither the matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is reported of the heathen deities, have the like: and that no impostor can have them all.

1. As to Moses, I suppose it will be allowed me, that he could not have persuaded 600,000 men, though he had brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea; fed them forty years, without bread, by miraculous manna, and the other matters of fact recorded in his books, if they had not been true. Because every man's

senses that were then alive, must have contradicted it. And therefore he must have imposed upon all their senses, if he could have made them believe it, when it was false and no such things done. So that here are the first and second of the above-mentioned four marks.

From the same reason, it is equally impossible for him to have made them receive his five books, as truth, and not to have rejected them as a manifest imposture; which told of all these things as done before their eyes, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, Deut. xi. 2, to verse 8. “ And know  
 “ you this day, for I speak not with your chil-  
 “ dren, which have not known, and which have  
 “ not seen the chastisement of the Lord your  
 “ God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his  
 “ stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his  
 “ acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt,  
 “ unto Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and unto  
 “ all his land, and what he did unto the army  
 “ of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their cha-  
 “ riots; how he made the water of the Red  
 “ Sea to overflow them as they pursued after  
 “ you; and how the Lord hath destroyed them  
 “ unto this day: and what he did unto you in  
 “ the wilderness, until ye came unto this place;  
 “ and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram,  
 “ the sons of Eliah, the son of Reuben, how  
 “ the



“ the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed  
 “ them up, and their households, and their tents,  
 “ and all the substance that was in their possession,  
 “ in the midst of all Israel. But your eyes  
 “ have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which  
 “ he did,” &c.

From hence we must suppose it impossible that these books of Moses (if an imposture) could have been invented and put upon the people who were then alive, when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore that even a suppose can stretch to, is, that these books were wrote in some age after Moses, and put out in his name.

And to this, I say, that if it was so, it was impossible that those books should have been received as the books of Moses, in that age wherein they may have been supposed to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the ark from his time. “ And it came  
 “ to pass, when Moses had made an end of  
 “ writing the words of this law in a book,  
 “ until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the ark of the  
 “ covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book  
 “ of the law, and put it in the side of the ark  
 “ of the covenant of the Lord your God, that  
 “ it may be there for a witness against thee,”  
 Deut.

Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26. And there was a copy of this book to be left likewise with the king. “ And it shall be, when he sitteth upon  
 “ the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write  
 “ him a copy of this law in a book, out of  
 “ that which is before the priests, the Le-  
 “ vites: and it shall be with him, and he  
 “ shall read therein all the days of his life :  
 “ that he may learn to fear the Lord his  
 “ God, to keep all the words of this law  
 “ and these statutes to do them.” Deut. xviii.  
 18, 19.

Here then you see that this book of the law speaks of itself, not only as an history or relation of what things were then done, but as the standing and municipal law and statutes of the nation of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people.

Now, in whatever age after Moses you will suppose this book to have been forged, it was impossible it could be received as truth; because it was not then to be found, either in the ark, or with the king, or any where else: for when first invented, every body must know, that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they could less believe it to be the book of their statutes, and the standing law of the land, which they had all along received, and by which they had been governed.

Could

Could any man, now at this day, invent a book of statutes or acts of parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the books of Moses (if they were invented in any age after Moses) to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, viz. the statutes and municipal law of the nation of the Jews: and to have persuaded the Jews, that they had owned and acknowledged these books, all along from the days of Moses, to that day in which they were first invented; that is, that they had owned them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole nation must, in an instant, forget their former laws and government, if they could receive these books as being their former laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouched themselves so to be. Let me ask the Deists but one short question: was there ever a book of sham laws, which were not the laws of the nation, palmed upon any people, since the world began? If not, with what face can they say this of the book of laws of the Jews? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any nation, or among any people?

But they must be yet more unreasonable.

For

For the books of Moses have a further demonstration of their truth than even other law-books have: for they not only contain the laws, but give an historical account of their institution, and the practice of them from that time: as of the passover in memory of the death of the first-born in Egypt\*: and that the same day, all the first-born of Israel, both of man and beast, were, by a perpetual law, dedicated to God: and the Levites taken for all the first-born of the children of Israel. That Aaron's rod which budded, was kept in the ark, in memory of the rebellion, and wonderful destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and for the confirmation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi. As likewise the pot of manna, in memory of their having been fed with it forty years in the wilderness. That the brazen serpent was kept (which remained to the days of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 4.) in memory of that wonderful deliverance, by only looking upon it, from the biting of the fiery serpents. Num. xxi. 9. The feast of Pentecost, in memory of the dreadful appearance of God upon Mount Horeb, &c.

And besides these remembrances of particular actions and occurrences, there were other solemn

\* Numbers viii. 17, 18.

institutions in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, in the general, which included all the particulars. As of the Sabbath, Deut. v. 15. Their daily sacrifices, and yearly expiation; their new moons, and several feasts and fasts. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily remembrances and recognitions of these things.

And not only so, but the books of the same Moses tell us, that a particular tribe (of Levi) was appointed and consecrated by God, as his priests; by whose hands, and none other, the sacrifices of the people were to be offered, and these solemn institutions to be celebrated. That it was death for any other to approach the altar. That their high priest wore a glorious mitre, and magnificent robes of God's own contrivance, with the miraculous Urim and Thummim in his breast-plate, whence the divine responses were given \*. That at his word, the king and all the people were to go out, and to come in. That these Levites were likewise the chief judges even in all civil causes, and that it was death to resist their sentence †. Now whenever it can be supposed that these books of Moses were forged in some ages after Moses,

\* Numbers xxvii. 21.

† Deut xvii. 8 to 13. 1 Chron. xiii. 4.

it is impossible they could have been received as true, unless the forgers could have made the whole nation believe, that they had received these books from their fathers, had been instructed in them when they were children, and had taught them to their children; moreover, that they had all been circumcised, and did circumcise their children, in pursuance to what was commanded in these books: that they had observed the yearly passover, the weekly sabbath, the new moons, and all these several feasts, fasts, and ceremonies commanded in these books: that they had never eaten any swines flesh, or other meats prohibited in these books: that they had a magnificent tabernacle, with a visible priesthood to administer in it, which was confined to the tribe of Levi; over whom was placed a glorious high-priest, cloathed with great and mighty prerogatives: whose death only could deliver those that were fled to the cities of refuge\*. And that these priests were their ordinary judges, even in civil matters: I say, was it possible to have persuaded a whole nation of men, that they had known and practised all these things, if they had not done it? or, secondly, to have received a book for truth, which said they had practised them, and appealed to that practice?

\* Numbers xxxv. 25, 28.



So that here are the third and fourth of the marks above-mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost degree of supposition, viz. that these things were practised, before these books of Moses were forged; and that those books did only impose upon the nation, in making them believe, that they had kept these observances in memory of such and such things, as were inserted in those books.

Well then, let us proceed upon this supposition, (however groundless) and now, will not the same impossibilities occur, as in the former case? For, first, this must suppose that the Jews kept all these observances in memory of nothing, or without knowing any thing of their original, or the reason why they kept them. Whereas these very observances did express the ground and reason of their being kept, as the Passover, in memory of God's passing over the children of the Israelites, in that night wherein he slew all the first-born of Egypt, and so of the rest.

But, secondly, let us suppose, contrary both to reason and matter of fact, that the Jews did not know any reason at all why they kept these observances; yet was it possible to put it upon them. That they had kept these observances in memory of what they had never heard of before that day, whensoever you will suppose that  
these

these books of Moses were first forged? For example, suppose I should now forge some romantic story, of strange things done a thousand years ago; and, in confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the Christian world, that they had all along, from that day to this, kept the first day of the week in memory of such an hero, an Apollonius, a Barcosbas, or a Mahomet; and had all been baptized in his name; and swore by his name, and upon that very book, (which I had then forged, and which they never saw before) in their public judicatures; that this book was their gospel and law, which they had ever since that time, these thousand years past, universally received and owned, and none other. I would ask any Deist, whether he thinks it possible that such a cheat could pass, or such a legend be received as the gospel of Christians; and that they could be made believe that they never had any other gospel? The same reason is as to the books of Moses; and must be, as to every matter of fact, which has all the four marks before-mentioned; and these marks secure any such matter of fact as much from being invented and imposed in any after ages, as at the time when such matters of fact were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar example more in this case. There is the Stonehenge in Salisbury-Plain, every body knows it; and yet none  
knows



knows the reason why those great stones were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now suppose I should write a book to-morrow, and tell there, that these stones were set up by Hercules, Polyphemus, or Garagantua, in memory of such and such of their actions. And for a further confirmation of this, should say in this book, that it was wrote at the time when such actions were done, and by the very actors themselves, or eye witnesses. And that this book had been received as truth and quoted by authors of the greatest reputation in all ages since. Moreover that this book was well known in England, and enjoined by act of parliament to be taught our children, and that we did teach it to our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children. I ask any Deist, whether he thinks this could pass upon England? And whether, if I, or any other should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believed, be sent to Bedlam?

Now let us compare this with the Stonehenge, as I may call it, or twelve great stones set up at Gilgal, which is told in the fourth chapter of Joshua. There it is said, verse 6, that the reason why they were set up, was, that when their children, in after ages, should ask the meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the thing in memory of which they were

set up, was such as could not possibly be imposed upon that nation, at that time when it was said to be done, it was as wonderful and miraculous as their passage through the Red Sea.

And withal, free from a very poor objection, which the Deists have advanced against that miracle of the Red Sea: thinking to salve it by a spring-tide, with the concurrence of a strong wind, happening at the same time; which left the sand so dry, as that the Israelites being all foot, might pass through the oozy places and holes, which it must be supposed the sea left behind it: but that the Egyptians, being all horse and chariots, stuck in those holes, and were entangled, so as that they could not march so fast as the Israelites: and that this was all the meaning of its being said, that God took off their (the Egyptians) chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they would make nothing extraordinary, at least, nothing miraculous, in all this action.

This is advanced in Le Clerc's Dissertations upon Genesis, lately printed in Holland, and that part with others of the like tendency, endeavouring to resolve other miracles, as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. into the mere natural causes, are put into English by the well-known T. Brown, for the edification of the Deists in England.

But

But these gentlemen have forgot, that the Israelites had great herds of many thousand cattle with them; which would be apter to stray, and fall into those holes and oozy places in the strand, than horses with riders, who might direct them.

But such precarious and silly supposes are not worth the answering. If there had been no more in this passage through the Red Sea than that of a spring-tide, &c. it had been impossible for Moses to have made the Israelites believe that relation given of it in Exodus, with so many particulars, which themselves saw to be true.

And all those Scriptures which magnify this action, and appeal to it as a full demonstration of the miraculous power of God, must be reputed as romance or legend.

I say this, for the sake of some Christians, who think it no prejudice to the truth of the Holy Bible, but rather an advantage, as rendering it more easy to be believed; if they can solve whatever seems miraculous in it, by the power of second causes: and so to make all, as they speak, natural and easy. Wherein, if they could prevail, the natural and easy result would be, not to believe one word in all those sacred oracles. For if things be not as they are told in any relation, that relation must be false. And if false in part, we cannot trust to it, either in whole or in part.

Here are to be excepted mis-translations and errors, either in copy or in press. But where there is no room for supposing of these, as where all copies do agree; there we must either receive all, or reject all. I mean in any book that pretends to be written from the mouth of God. For in other common histories, we may believe part, and reject part, as we see cause.

But to return. The passage of the Israelites over Jordan, in memory of which those stones at Gilgal were set up, is free from all those little carpings before-mentioned, that are made as to the passage through the Red Sea. For notice was given to the Israelites the day before, of this great miracle to be done, Josh. iii. 5. It was done at noon-day, before the whole nation. And when the waters of Jordan were divided, it was not at any low ebb, but at the time when that river overflowed all his banks, ver. 15. And it was done, not by winds, or in length of time, which winds must take to do it: but all on the sudden, as soon as the “feet of the priests that  
“bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the  
“water, then the waters which came down from  
“above, stood and rose up upon an heap, very  
“far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan:  
“and those that came down toward the sea of  
“the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were  
“cut off: and the people passed over, right  
“against

“ against Jericho. The priests stood in the midst  
 “ of Jordan, till all the armies of Israel had  
 “ passed over. And it came to pass, when the  
 “ priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the  
 “ Lord were come up, out of the midst of Jordan,  
 “ and the soles of the priests’ feet were lift up  
 “ upon the dry land, that the waters of Jordan  
 “ returned unto their place, and flowed over all  
 “ his banks as they did before. And the people  
 “ came out of Jordan, on the tenth day of the  
 “ first month, and encamped in Gilgal on the  
 “ east border of Jericho, and those twelve stones  
 “ which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua  
 “ pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the  
 “ children of Israel, saying, When your children  
 “ shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying,  
 “ What mean these stones? Then shall ye let  
 “ your children know, saying, Israel came over  
 “ this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your  
 “ God dried up the waters of Jordan from before  
 “ you, until ye were passed over; as the Lord  
 “ your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried  
 “ up from before us, until we were gone over,  
 “ that all the people of the earth might know  
 “ the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that  
 “ ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.”  
 Chap. iv. from ver. 18.

If the passage over the Red Sea had been only  
 taking advantage of a spring tide, or the like,



how would this teach all the people of the earth, that the hand of the Lord was mighty? How would a thing no more remarkable have been taken notice of through all the world? How would it have taught Israel to fear the Lord, when they must know, that notwithstanding of all these big words, there was so little in it? How could they have believed, or received a book, as truth, which they knew, told the matter so far otherwise from what it was?

But, as I said, this passage over Jordan, which is here compared to that of the Red Sea, is free from all those cavils that are made, as to that of the Red Sea, and is a further attestation to it, being said to be done in the same manner as was that of the Red Sea.

Now, to form our argument, let us suppose, that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan. That these stones at Gilgal were set up upon some other occasion, in some after age. And then, that some designing man invented this book of Joshua, and said, that it was wrote by Joshua at that time. And gave this stonage at Gilgal for a testimony of the truth of it. Would not every body say to him, we know the stonage at Gilgal, but we never heard before of this reason for it? Nor of this book of Joshua? Where has it been all this while? And where, and how came you, after so many ages, to find it?

it? Besides, this book tells us, that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children, from age to age : and therefore, that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stonage at Gilgal, as a memorial of it. But we were never taught it, when we were children ; nor did ever teach our children any such thing. And it is not likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stonage did continue, which was set up for that and no other end !

And if, for the reasons before given, no such imposition could be put upon us as to the stonage in Salisbury-Plain ; how much less could it be to the stonage at Gilgal ?

And if where we know not the reason of a bare naked monument, such a sham reason cannot be imposed, how much more is it impossible to impose upon us in actions and observances, which we celebrate in memory of particular passages ? How impossible to make us forget those passages which we daily commemorate ; and persuade us, that we had always kept such institutions in memory of what we never heard of before ; that is, that we knew it, before we knew it !

And if we find it thus impossible for an imposition to be put upon us, even in some things which have not all the four marks before-mentioned ; how much more impossible is it, that

any deceit should be in that thing where all the four marks do meet !

This has been shewed in the first place, as to the matters of fact of Moses.

2. Therefore I come now (secondly) to shew, that as in the matters of fact of Moses, so likewise all these four marks do meet in the matters of fact, which are recorded in the Gospel of our blessed Saviour. And my work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before of Moses and his books, is every way as applicable to Christ and his Gospel. His works and his miracles are there said to be done publicly in the face of the world, as he argued to his accusers, " I spake openly to the world, and in secret have " I said nothing," John xviii. 20. It is told, Acts ii. 41, that three thousand at one time; and, Acts iv. 4, that above five thousand at another time, were converted, upon conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publicly before their eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the rules before-mentioned.

Then for the two second: Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted as perpetual memorials of these things; and they were not instituted in after ages, but at the very time when these things were said to be done; and have been observed



served without interruption, in all ages through the whole Christian world, down all the way from that time to this. And Christ himself did ordain apostles and other ministers of his Gospel, to preach and administer the sacraments; and to govern his church: and that always, even unto the end of the world \*. Accordingly they have continued by regular succession, to this day: and, no doubt, ever shall, while the earth shall last. So that the Christian clergy are as notorious a matter of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. And the Gospel is as much a law to the Christians, as the book of Moses to the Jews: and it being part of the matters of fact related in the Gospel, that such an order of men were appointed by Christ, and to continue to the end of the world; consequently, if the Gospel was a fiction, and invented (as it must be) in some ages after Christ; then, at that time when it was first invented, there could be no such order of clergy, as derived themselves from the institution of Christ; which must give the lye to the Gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. And the matters of fact of Christ being pressed to be true, no otherwise than as there was at that time (when ever the Deists will suppose the Gospel to be forged) not only public sacraments of Christ's

\* Matt. xviii. 20.

institution, but an order of clergy, likewise of his appointment to administer them : and it being impossible there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible that they should be received when invented. And therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have imposed upon mankind in this matter, by inventing of it in after-ages, as at the time when those things were said to be done.

3. The matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is fabled of the deities, do all want some of the aforesaid four rules, whereby the certainty of matters of fact is demonstrated. First, for Mahomet, he pretended to no miracles, as he tells us in his Alcoran, c. 6, &c. and those which are commonly told of him pass among the Mahometans themselves, but as legendary fables : and, as such, are rejected by the wise and learned among them ; as the legends of their saints are in the church of Rome. See Dr. Prideaux's *Life of Mahomet*, page 34.

But, in the next place, those which are told of him, do all want the two first rules before-mentioned. For his pretended converse with the moon : his mersea, or night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, &c. were not performed before any body. We have only his own word for them. And they are as groundless as the delusions of the Fox or Muggleton  
among

among ourselves. The same is to be said (in the second place) of the fables of the heathen gods, of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's turning himself into a bull, and the like; besides the folly and unworthiness of such senseless pretended miracles. And moreover the wise among the heathen did reckon no otherwise of these but as fables, which had a mythology, or mystical meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the rationale or explication. And it is plain enough that Ovid meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, the heathen deities had their priests: they had likewise feasts, games, and other public institutions in memory of them. But all these want the fourth mark, viz. that such priesthood and institutions should commence from the time that such things as they commemorate were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure after ages from the imposture, by detecting it, at the time when first invented, as hath been argued before. But the Bacchanalia, and other heathen feasts, were instituted many ages after what was reported of these gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no proof. And the priests of Bacchus, Apollo, &c. were not ordained by these supposed gods: but were appointed by others, in after ages, only in honour to them. And therefore these orders of priests are no evi-

dence to the matters of fact which are reported of their gods.

IV. Now to apply what has been said. You may challenge all the Deists in the world to shew any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules or marks before-mentioned. No, it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the histories of Exodus and the Gospel never could have been received, if they had not been true; because the institution of the priesthood of Levi, and of Christ; of the Sabbath, the Passover, of Circumcision, of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, &c. are there related, as descending all the way down from those times, without interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade men that they had been circumcised or baptized, had circumcised or baptized their children, celebrated passovers, sabbaths, sacraments, &c. under the government and administration of a certain order of priests, if they had done none of these things, as to make them believe that they had gone through seas upon dry land, seen the dead raised, &c. And without believing these, it was impossible that either the law or the gospel could have been received.

And the truth of the matters of fact of Exodus and the gospel, being no otherwise pressed upon men, than as they have practised such public institutions, it is appealing to the senses of mankind

kind for the truth of them; and makes it impossible for any to have invented such stories in after ages, without a palpable detection of the cheat when first invented; as impossible as to have imposed upon the senses of mankind, at the time when such public matters of fact were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four marks is false: but, that nothing can be false, which has them all.

I have no manner of doubt that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, that he fought at Pharsalia, was killed in the senate-house, and many other matters of fact of ancient times, though we keep no public observances in memory of them.

But this shews that the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ, have come down to us better guarded than any other matters of fact, how true soever.

And yet our Deists, who would laugh any man out of the world as an irrational brute, that should offer to deny Cæsar or Alexander, Homer or Virgil, their public works and actions, do, at the same time, value themselves as the only men of wit and sense, of free, generous, and unbiaſſed judgments for ridiculing the histories of Moses and Christ, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible marks which the others want,



VI. Besides that the importance of the subject would oblige all men to enquire more narrowly into the one than the other: for what consequence is it to me, or to the world, whether there was such a man as Cæsar, whether he beat, or was beaten at Pharsalia, whether Homer or Virgil wrote such books, and whether what is related in the Iliads or Æneids be true or false? It is not two-pence up or down to any man in the world. And therefore it is worth no man's while to enquire into it, either to oppose or justify the truth of these relations.

But our very souls and bodies, both this life and eternity are concerned in the truth of what is related in the holy Scriptures; and therefore men would be more inquisitive to search into the truth of these, than of any other matters of fact; examine and sift them narrowly; and find out the deceit, if any such could be found: for it concerned them nearly, and was of the last importance to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these matters of fact, so sifted, so examined, and so attested as no other matters of fact in the world ever were; and yet to think it the most highly unreasonable, even to madness, to deny other matters of fact, which have not the thousandth part of their evidence, and are of no consequence at all to us whether true or false!

VII. There



VII. There are several other topics, from whence the truth of the Christian Religion is evinced to all who will judge by reason, and give themselves leave to consider. As the improbability that ten or twelve poor illiterate fishermen should form a design of converting the whole world to believe their delusions; and the impossibility of their effecting it, without force of arms, learning, oratory, or any one visible thing that could recommend them! And to impose a doctrine quite opposite to the lusts and pleasures of men, and all worldly advantages or enjoyments! And this in an age of so great learning and sagacity as that wherein the Gospel was first preached! That these apostles should not only undergo all the scorn and contempt, but the severest persecutions and most cruel deaths that could be inflicted, in attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere deceit and forgery of their own contriving! Some have suffered for errors which they thought to be truth, but never any for what themselves knew to be lies. And the apostles must know what they thought to be lies, if it was so, because they spoke of those things which, they said, they had both seen and heard, had looked upon and handled with their hands, &c \*.

\* Acts iv, 20. 1 John i. 1.

Neither can it be, that they, perhaps, might have proposed some temporal advantages to themselves, but missed of them, and met with sufferings instead of them: for, if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their disappointment, they would have discovered their conspiracy; especially when they might not have only saved their lives, but got great rewards for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this.

But this is not all: for they tell us that their Master bid them expect nothing but sufferings in this world. This is the tenure of that Gospel which they taught; and they told the same to all whom they converted. So that here was no disappointment.

For all that were converted by them, were converted upon the certain expectation of sufferings, and bidden prepare for it. Christ commanded his disciples to take up their cross daily, and follow him; and told them, that in the world they should have tribulation; that whoever did not forsake father, mother, wife, children, lands, and their very lives, could not be his disciples; that he who sought to save his life in this world, should lose it in the next.

Now that this despised doctrine of the cross should prevail so universally against the allurements

ments of flesh and blood, and all the blandishments of this world; against the rage and persecution of all the kings and powers of the earth, must shew its original to be divine, and its protector almighty. What is it else could conquer without arms; persuade without rhetoric; overcome enemies; disarm tyrants; and subdue empires without opposition!

VIII. We may add to all this, the testimonies of the most bitter enemies and persecutors of Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles, to the truth of the matter of fact of Christ, such as Josephus and Tacitus; of which the first flourished about forty years after the death of Christ, and the other about seventy years after: so that they were capable of examining into the truth, and wanted not prejudice and malice sufficient to have inclined them to deny the matter of fact itself of Christ: but their confessing to it, as likewise Lucian, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the apostate; the Mahometans since, and all other enemies of Christianity that have arisen in the world, is an undeniable attestation to the truth of the matter of fact.

IX. But there is another argument more strong and convincing than even this matter of fact; more than the certainty of what I see with my eyes; and which the Apostle Peter called a more sure word, that is proof, than what he

he saw and heard upon the Holy Mount, when our blessed Saviour was transfigured before him and two other of the apostles: for having repeated that passage as a proof of that whereof they were eye witnesses, and heard the voice from heaven giving attestation to our Lord Christ, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. he says, verse 19, “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy,” for the proof of this Jesus being the Messiah, that is, the prophecies which had gone before of him from the beginning of the world, and all exactly fulfilled in him.

Men may dispute an imposition or delusion upon our outward senses. But how that can be false, which has been so long, even from the beginning of the world, and so often by all the prophets in several ages foretold; how can this be an imposition or a forgery?

This is particularly insisted on in the Method with the Jews. And even the Deists must confess, that that book we call the Old Testament, was in being in the hands of the Jews long before our Saviour came into the world. And if they will be at the pains to compare the prophecies that are there of the Messiah, with the fulfilling of them, as to time, place, and all other circumstances in the person, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our blessed Saviour, will find this proof what our  
apostle

apostle here calls it, “ a light shining in a dark  
“ place, until the day dawn, and the day-star  
“ arise in your hearts.” Which God grant.  
Here is no possibility of deceit or imposture.

Old prophecies (and all so agreeing) could not have been contrived to countenance a new cheat: and nothing could be a cheat, that could fulfil all these.

For this therefore I refer the Deists to the Method with the Jews.

I desire them likewise to look there, sect. xi. and consider the prophecies given so long ago, of which they see the fulfilling at this day with their own eyes, of the state of the Jews for many ages past and at present, without a king or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, scattered to the four winds, sifted as with a sieve, among all nations; yet preserved, and always so to be, a distinct people from all others of the whole earth. Whereas those mighty monarchies which oppressed the Jews, and which commanded the world in their turns, and had the greatest human prospect of perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their names should be blotted out from under heaven.

As likewise, that as remarkable of our blessed Saviour, concerning the preservation and progress of the Christian church, when in her  
swaddling

swaddling cloaths, consisting only of a few poor fishermen. Not by the sword, as that of Mahomet, but under all the persecution of men and hell: which yet should not prevail against her.

But though I offer these, as not to be slighted by the Deists, to which they can shew nothing equal in all prophane history, and in which it is impossible any cheat can lie; yet I put them not upon the same foot as the prophecies before-mentioned of the marks and coming of the Messiah, which have been since the world began.

And that general expectation of the whole earth, at the time of his coming, insisted upon in the Method with the Jews, sect. 5, is greatly to be noticed.

But, I say, the foregoing prophecies of our Saviour are so strong a proof, as even miracles would not be sufficient to break their authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a true miracle could be wrought in contradiction to them: for that would be for God to contradict himself.

But no sign or wonder, that could possibly be solved, should shake this evidence.

It is this that keeps the Jews in their obstinacy; though they cannot deny the matters of fact done by our blessed Saviour to be truly miracles, if so done as said. Nor can they deny  
that



that they were so done, because they have all the four marks before-mentioned. Yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the Gospel is in contradiction to the law; which, if it were, the consequence would be unavoidable, that both could not be true. To solve this, is the business of the Method with the Jews. But the contradiction which they suppose, is in their comments that they put upon the law; especially they expect a literal fulfilling of those promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, and outward glories of the church, of which there is such frequent mention in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and all the Prophets. And many Christians do expect the same, and take those texts as literally as the Jews do. We do believe and pray for the conversion of the Jews. For this end they have been so miraculously preserved, according to the prophecies so long before of it. And when that time shall come, as they are the most honourable and ancient of all the nations on the earth, so will their church return to be the mother Christian church as she was at first; and Rome must surrender to Jerusalem. Then all nations will flow thither; and even Ezekiel's temple may be literally built there, in the metropolis of the whole earth; which Jerusalem must be, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet  
with

with the conversion of the Jews. For no nation will then contend with the Jews, nor church with Jerusalem for supremacy. All nations will be ambitious to draw their original from the Jews, "whose are the fathers and  
" from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ  
" came."

Then will be fulfilled that outward grandeur and restoration of the Jews and of Jerusalem, which they expect, pursuant to the prophecies.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular time of the reign of the Messiah. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go through great conflicts and trials with their Messiah (as the Christian church has done) before his final conquest, and that they come to reign with him. So that this is no obstruction to their embracing of Christianity. They see the same things fulfilled in us, which they expect themselves; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the Deists, lest they may think that the Jews have some stronger arguments than they know of, that they are not persuaded by the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and by the fulfilling of all the prophecies in him, that were made-concerning the Messiah.

As

As I said before, I would not plead even miracles against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a Jew, it is much more so to a Deist, who labours not under these objections.

Besides, I would not seem to clash with that (in a sound sense) reasonable caution used by Christian writers, not to put the issue of the truth wholly upon miracles, without this addition, when not done in a contradiction to the revelations already given in the Holy Scriptures.

And they do it upon this consideration, that though it is impossible to suppose that God would work a real miracle, in contradiction to what he has already revealed; yet, men may be imposed upon by false and seeming miracles, and pretended revelations, (as there are many examples, especially in the church of Rome) and so may be shaken in the faith, if they keep not to the Holy Scriptures as their rule.

We are told, 2 Thess. ii. 9, “ of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders.” And Rev. xiii. 14. xvi. 14, and xix. 20. of the devil, and false prophets working miracles. But the word, in all these places, is only *Σημεῖα*, Signs, that is, as it is rendered, Matt. xxv. 24, which, though sometimes it may be used to signify real miracles, yet not always, not in these places.

places. For though every miracle be a sign and a wonder, yet every sign or wonder is not a miracle.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common topic of the Deists, who, when they are not able to stand out against the evidence of fact, that such and such miracles have been done, then turn about, and deny such things to be miracles, at least we can never be sure whether any wonderful thing that is shewn to us be a true or a false miracle.

And the great argument they go upon is this, that a miracle being that which exceeds the power of nature, we cannot know what exceeds it, unless we knew the utmost extent of the power of nature; and no man pretends to know that, therefore that no man can certainly know whether any event be miraculous; and, consequently, he may be cheated in his judgment betwixt true and false miracles.

To which I answer, that men may be so cheated, and there are many examples of it.

But that though we may not always know when we are cheated, yet we can certainly tell, in many cases, when we are not cheated.

For though we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, perhaps in any one thing; yet it does not follow that we know not the nature of any thing in some measure:

and

and that certainly too. For example, though I do not know the utmost extent of the power of fire, yet I certainly know that it is the nature of fire to burn; and that when proper fuel is administered to it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Therefore, if I see three men taken off the street, in their common wearing apparel, and without any preparation cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, and that the flame was so fierce that it burnt up those men that threw them in, and yet that these who were thrown in should walk up and down in the bottom of the furnace, and I should see a fourth person with them of glorious appearance, like the Son of God. And that these men should come up again out of the furnace, without any harm, or so much as the smell of fire upon themselves or their clothes, I could not be deceived in thinking that there was a stop put to the nature of fire, as to these men; and that it had its effect upon the men whom it burned, at the same time.

Again: though I cannot tell how wonderful and sudden an increase of corn might be produced by the concurrence of many causes, as a warm climate, the fertility of the soil, &c. yet this I can certainly know, that there is not that natural force in the breath of two or three words, spoken to multiply one small loaf of bread so

fast, in the breaking of it, as truly and really, not only in appearance and shew to the eye, but to fill the bellies of several thousand hungry persons ; and that the fragments should be much more than the bread was at first.

So neither in a word spoken, to raise the dead, cure diseases, &c.

Therefore, though we know not the utmost extent of the power of nature ; yet we certainly know what is contrary to the nature of several such things as we do know.

And therefore, though we may be cheated, and imposed upon in many seeming miracles and wonders ; yet there are some things wherein we may be certain.

But further, the Deists acknowledge a God of an Almighty power, who made all things.

Yet they would put it out of his power to make any revelation of his will to mankind. For if we cannot be certain of any miracle, how should we know when God sent any thing extraordinary to us ?

Nay, how should we know the ordinary power of nature, if we know not what exceeded it ? If we know not what is natural, how do we know there is such a thing as nature ? That all is not supernatural, all miracles, and so disputable, till we come to downright scepticism, and doubt the certainty of our outward senses, whether



ther we see, hear, or feel ; or all be not a miraculous illusion !

Which, because I know the Deists are not inclined to do, therefore I will return to pursue my argument upon the conviction of our outward senses, desiring only this, that they would allow the senses of other men to be as certain as their own ; which they cannot refuse, since without this they can have no certainty of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the cause is summed up shortly in this ; that though we cannot see what was done before our time, yet by the marks which I have laid down concerning the certainty of matters of fact done before our time, we may be as much assured of the truth of them, as if we saw them with our eyes ; because whatever matter of fact has all the four marks before-mentioned, could never have been invented and received but upon the conviction of the outward senses of all those who did receive it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this topic which I have chosen, does stand upon the conviction even of men's outward senses. And since you have confined me to one topic, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only named.

XII. And now it lies upon the Deists, if they would appear as men of reason, to shew some

matter of fact of former ages, which they allow to be true, that has greater evidence of its truth, than the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ ; otherwise they cannot, with any shew of reason, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But I have given them greater latitude than this, for I have shewn such marks of the truth of the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ ; as no other matters of fact of those times, however true, have, but these only : and I put it upon them to shew any forgery that has all these marks.

This is a short issue. Keep them close to this. This determines the cause all at once.

Let them produce their Apollonius Tyanæus, whose life was put into English by the execrable Charles Blount \*, and compared with all the wit and

\* The hand of that scorner, which durst write such outrageous blasphemy against his Maker, the Divine Vengeance has made his own executioner. Which I would not have mentioned (because the like judgment has befallen others) but that the Theistical Club have set this up as a principle, and printed a vindication of this same Blount for murdering himself, by way of justification of self-murder ; which some of them have since, as well as formerly, horridly practised upon themselves. Therefore this is no common judgment to which they are delivered, but a visible mark set upon them, to shew how far God has forsaken them ; and as a caution to all Christians, to beware

and malice he was master of, to the life and miracles of our blessed Saviour.

Let them take aid from all the legends in the Church of Rome, those pious cheats, the forest disgraces of Christianity ; and which have bid the fairest of any one contrivance, to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, the whole truth of the Gospel, by putting them all upon the same foot : at least they are so understood by the generality of their devotees, though disowned and laughed at by the learned, and men of sense among them.

Let them pick and choose the most probable of all the fables of the heathen deities, and see if they can find in any of these, the four marks before-mentioned.

Otherwise let them submit to the irrefragable certainty of the Christian religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding all that is said, the Deists, will still contend that all this is but priest-craft, the invention of priests for their own profit, &c. then they will give us an idea of priests, far different from what they intend : for then we must look upon these priests, not only as the cunningest and wisest of mankind,

beware of them, and not to come near the tents of these wicked men, lest they perish in their destruction, both of soul and body.

but we shall be attempted to adore them as Deities, who have such power as to impose at their pleasure, upon the senses of mankind, to make them believe that they had practised such public institutions, enacted them by laws, taught them to their children, &c. when they had never done any of these things, or ever so much as heard of them before: and then, upon the credit of their believing that they had done such things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same foundation, whatever they pleased to impose upon them, as to former ages: I say, such a power as this must exceed all that is human; and consequently make us rank these priests far above the condition of mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them outdo all that has ever been related of the infernal powers: for though their legerdemain has extended to deceive some unwary beholders, and their power of working some seeming miracles has been great, yet it never reached nor ever was supposed to reach so far, as to deceive the senses of all mankind, in matters of such public and notorious nature as those of which we now speak, to make them believe, that they had enacted laws for such public observances, continually practised them, taught them to their children, and had been instructed in them themselves, from their childhood,

childhood, if they had never enacted, practised, taught, or been taught such things.

3. And as this exceeds all the power of hell and devils, so is it more than ever God Almighty has done since the foundation of the world. None of the miracles that he has shewn, or belief which he has required to any thing that he has revealed, has ever contradicted the outward senses of any one man in the world, much less of all mankind together. For miracles being appeals to our outward senses, if they should overthrow the certainty of our outward senses, must destroy with it all their own certainty as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a miracle exhibited to our senses, than upon the supposition of the certainty of our senses, upon which we give credit to a miracle, that is shewn to our senses.

4. This, by the way, is yet an unanswered argument against the miracle of transubstantiation, and shews the weakness of the defence which the Church of Rome offers for it, (from whom the Socinians have licked it up, and of late have gloried much in it amongst us) that the doctrines of the Trinity or Incarnation contain as great seeming absurdities as that of Transubstantiation: for I would ask, which of our senses it is which the doctrines of the Trinity or Incarnation do contradict? Is it our seeing,

hearing, feeling, taste, or smell? Whereas Transubstantiation does contradict all these. Therefore the comparison is exceedingly short, and out of purpose. But to return.

If the Christian religion be a cheat, and nothing else but the invention of priests, and carried on by their craft, it makes their power and wisdom greater than that of men, angels, or devils; and more than God himself ever yet shewed or expressed, to deceive and impose upon the senses of mankind, in such public and notorious matters of fact.

XIV. And this miracle, which the Deists must run into to avoid these recorded of Moses and Christ, is much greater and more astonishing than all the Scriptures tell of them.

So that these men who laugh at all miracles are now obliged to account for the greatest of all, how the senses of mankind could be imposed upon in such public matters of fact.

And how then can they make the priests the most contemptible of all mankind, since they make them the sole authors of this the greatest of miracles!

XV. And since the Deists (these men of sense and reason) have so vile and mean an idea of the priests of all religions, why do they not recover the world out of the possession and government of such blockheads? Why do they  
suffer



suffer kings and states to be led by them ; to establish their deceits by laws, and inflict penalties upon the opposers of them ? Let the Deists try their hands ; they have been trying, and are now busy about it. And free liberty they have. Yet have they not prevailed, nor ever yet did prevail in any civilized or generous nation. And though they have some inroads among the Hottentots, and some other the most brutal part of mankind, yet are they still exploded, and priests have and do prevail against them, among not only the greatest, but best part of the world, and the most glorious for arts, learning, and war.

XVI. For as the devil does ape God, in his institutions of religion, his feasts, sacrifices, &c. so likewise in his priests, without whom no religion, whether true or false, can stand. False religion is but a corruption of the true. The true was before it, though it be followed close upon the heels.

The revelation made to Moses is elder than any history extant in the heathen world. The heathens, in imitation of him, pretended likewise to their revelations : but I have given those marks which distinguish them from the true : none of them have those four marks before-mentioned.

Now the Deists think all revelations to be equally pretended, and a cheat ; and the priests

of all religions to be the same contrivers and jugglers; and therefore they proclaim war equally against all, and are equally engaged to bear the brunt of all.

And if the contest be only betwixt the Deists and the priests, which of them are the men of the greatest parts and sense, let the effects determine it; and let the Deists yield the victory to their conquerors, who, by their own confession, carry all the world before them.

XVII. If the Deists say, that this is because all the world are blockheads, as well as those priests who govern them; that all the blockheads except the Deists, who vote themselves only to be men of sense; this (besides the modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved topic, in behalf of what they call Natural Religion, against the revealed, viz. appealing to the common reason of mankind; this they set up against revelation; think this to be sufficient for all the uses of men, here or hereafter, (if there be any after state) and therefore that there is no use of revelation: this common reason they advance as infallible, at least as the surest guide, yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them; when this common reason runs after revelation, (as it always has done) then common reason is a beast, and we must look for reason, not from the common sentiments of mankind, but only among the beaux, the Deists.

XVIII. Therefore, if the Deists would avoid the mortification (which will be very uneasy to them) to yield and submit to be subdued and hewed down before the priests, whom of all mankind they hate and despise; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the truth is, that religion is no invention of priests, but of divine original; that priests were instituted by the same author of religion; and that their order is a perpetual and living monument of the matters of fact of their religion, instituted from the time that such matters of fact were said to be done, as the Levites from Moses, the Apostles and succeeding Clergy from Christ, to this day; that no heathen priests can say the same; they were not appointed by the gods whom they served, but by others in after ages; they cannot stand the test of the four rules before-mentioned, which the Christian priests can do, and they only. Now the Christian priesthood as instituted by Christ himself, and continued by succession to this day, being as impregnable and flagrant a testimony to the truth of the matters of fact of Christ, as the Sacraments, or any other public institutions; besides that, if the priesthood were taken away, the sacraments and other public institutions, which are administered by their hands, must fall with them: therefore the devil has been most busy, and bent his greatest

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force

force in all ages against the priesthood, knowing that if that goes down all goes with it.

XIX. With the Deists, in this cause, are joined the Quakers and other of our Dissenters, who throw off the succession of our priesthood, (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the sacraments and public festivals. And if the devil could have prevailed to have these dropt, the Christian religion would lose the most undeniable and demonstrative proof for the truth of the matter of fact of our Saviour, upon which the truth of his doctrine does depend. Therefore we may see the artifice and malice of the devil, in all these attempts. And let those wretched instruments whom he ignorantly (and some by a misguided zeal) has deluded thus to undetermine Christianity, now at last look back and see the snare in which they have been taken : for if they had prevailed, or ever should, Christianity dies with them. At least it will be rendered precarious, as a thing of which no certain proof can be given. Therefore let those of them who have any zeal for the truth, bless God that they have not prevailed : and quickly leave them ; and let all others be aware of them.

And let us consider and honour the priesthood, sacraments, and other public institutions of Christ, not only as a means of grace and helps  
to

to devotion, but as the great evidences of the Christian religion.

Such evidences as no pretended revelation ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish legends and impostures whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one word of advice would not be lost upon men who think so unmeasurably of themselves as the Deists, you may represent to them what a condition they are in, who spend that life and sense which God has given them, in ridiculing the greatest of his blessings, his revelations of Christ, and by Christ, to redeem those from eternal misery, who shall believe in him, and obey his laws. And that God, in his wonderful mercy and wisdom, has so guarded his revelations, as that it is past the power of men or devils to counterfeit: and that there is no denying of them, unless we will be so absurd as to deny not only the reason but the certainty of the outward senses, not only of one, or two, or three, but of mankind in general. That this case is so very plain, that nothing but want of thought can hinder any to discover it. That they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can shew some forgery which has all the four marks before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their cause, and yield a happy victory over themselves:

selves : or else sit down under all that ignominy, with which they have loaded the priests, of being, not only the most pernicious, but (what will gall them more) the most inconsiderate and inconsiderable of mankind.

Therefore, let them not think it an undervaluing of their worthiness, that their whole cause is comprised within so narrow a compass : and no more time bestowed upon it than it is worth.

But let them rather reflect how far they have been all this time from Christianity ; whose rudiments they are yet to learn ! How far from the way of salvation ! How far the race of their lives is run before they have set one step in the road to heaven. And therefore, how much diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever ; and be convinced, by a dreadful experience, when it is too late, that the Gospel is a truth, and of the last consequence.



A  
LETTER

FROM THE

AUTHOR OF THE SHORT METHOD WITH  
THE DEISTS.

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S I R,

I HAVE read over your papers with great satisfaction, and I heartily bless God with you, and for you, that he has had mercy upon you, and opened your eyes, to see the wondrous things of his law, to convince you of those irrefragable proofs he has afforded for the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures, such as no other writings upon earth can pretend to, and which are incompatible with any forgery or deceit. He has given you likewise that true spirit of repentance to bring forth the fruits thereof; that is, to make what satisfaction you can for the injuries you have done to religion, by answering what has been published formerly  
by

by yourself against it ; and being converted, you endeavour to strengthen your brethren.

## I. CREATION.

You have laid the true foundation of the being of God, against the Atheist ; of his creation of the world, and providence, against the asserters of blind chance. If all be chance, then their thoughts are so too ; and there is no reasoning or argument in the world.

Others, because they know not what to say, suppose the world, and all things in it, to have been from eternity, and to have gone on, as now, in a constant succession of men begetting men, trees springing from trees, &c. without any beginning.

But if it was always as it is now, then every thing had a beginning, every man, bird, beast, tree, &c. And what has a beginning, cannot be without a beginning.

Therefore, as it is evident that nothing can make itself, it is equally evident that a succession of things made must have a beginning. A succession of beginnings cannot be without a beginning ; for that would be literally a beginning without a beginning, which is a contradiction in terms.

## II. PRO-

## II. PROVIDENCE.

And to deny Providence in the first cause, is the denying of a God : whence we had our providence ? For we find we have a providence to forecast and contrive how to preserve and govern that which we make or acquire : therefore there must be a providence much more eminently in God, to preserve and govern all the works which he has made. He that made the eye, does he not see ? And he who put providence into the heart of man, has he none himself ?

And the glory of his wisdom and power seems greater to us in the acts of his providence than even in those of creation, especially in his governing the actions of free agents, without taking from them the freedom of their will to do as they list, and turning their very evil into good by the almightiness of his wisdom. We see great part of this every day before our eyes, in his turning the councils of the wise into foolishness, and trapping the wicked in the works of their own hands. This strikes us more sensibly, and is nearer to us than the making of a tree or a star ; and we feel that over-ruling power in his providence, which we contemplate in his creation.

When

When the sins of men are increased to provoke God to take vengeance, he permits the spirit of fury to incline their wills to war and destruction of each other, and nation rises up against nation ; and when in his mercy he thinks the punishment is sufficient, he calms their rage like the roaring of the sea, and there is peace. And they are so free agents in all this, that they think it is all their own doing ; and so really it is, though under the unseen direction of a superior power.

But not only in the public transactions of the world his providence is observable ; there is no man who has taken notice of his own life, but must find it as to his very private affairs, a thought sometimes darting into his mind to rid him out of a difficulty, or shew him an advantage, which he could not find in much considering before. At other times a man's mind is so clouded as if his eyes were shut, that he cannot see his way. Again, several events which he thought most funest, and his utter ruin, he finds afterwards to be much for the best, and that he had been undone if that had not happened which he feared. On the other hand, many things which he thought for his great benefit, he has found to be for his hurt. This shews a providence which sees further than we can, and disposes all our actions, though done in the full freedom

freedom of our own will, to what events, either good or bad for us, as he pleases.

### III. REVELATION.

But these considerations from the creation and providence, though admirable and glorious, are within the oracles of reason, and are but earthly things, in comparison of those heavenly things which God has revealed to man at sundry times, and in divers manners, and are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and which otherwise it was impossible for man to have known. “\* For  
“ what man is he that can know the counsel of  
“ God? Or who can think what the will of  
“ the Lord is? For the thoughts of mortal  
“ men are miserable, and our devices are but  
“ uncertain; for the corruptible body preffeth  
“ down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle  
“ weigheth down the mind that museth upon  
“ many things; and hardly do we guess aright  
“ at things that are upon earth, and with labour  
“ do we find the things that are before us: but  
“ the things that are in heaven, who hath  
“ searched out?”

This then must be purely the subject of revelation; but when the Deist is come thus far,

\* Wisdom ix, 13, 14, 15, 16.

he is entered into a wide field ; for all religions, Jewish, Heathen, Christian, and Mahometan, pretend to revelation for their original.

To clear this point was the design of the Short Method with the Deists, which gave the first opportunity to our conversation.

The Heathen and Mahometan religions not only want those marks (there set down) which ascertain the truth of fact, but their morals and worship are impure, and inconsistent with the attributes of God ; as the indulgence of fornication and uncleanness among the Heathen, and their human sacrifices (most abhorrent to the God of holiness and mercy) and the filthy obscenity of their very *sacra* ; besides the great defect of their morals, which knew no such thing as humility, forgiveness of injuries, loving their enemies, and returning good for evil.—Some of their philosophers spoke against revenging of injuries, as bringing greater injury to ourselves, or not worth the while ; but not upon the account of humanity and love to our brethren, and doing them good, though they did evil to us : and by the word *humilitas*, they meant only a lowness and dejection of mind, which is a vice ; but they had no notion of it as a virtue, in having a low opinion of one's self, and in honour preferring others before us : this they thought a vice and abjection of spirits.

You



You may see pride and self-conceit run through all their philosophy, besides their principle of increasing their empire, by conquering other countries who did them no harm, whom they called barbarians.

Into this class comes likewise the Sensual Paradise proposed by Mahomet, and his principle of propagating his religion by the sword.

The Jewish religion has all the certainty of fact, and its morals are good; but because of the hardness of their hearts, they came not up to the primitive purity, as in case of polygamy and divorce, wherein our blessed Saviour reduces them to the original. That from the beginning it was not so; and in several other cases mentioned in his Sermon upon the Mount.

Therefore the perfection of morals, and of the true knowledge of God, was reserved for the Christian religion, which has, in more abundant manner than even the Jewish, the infallible marks of the truth of the facts, in the multitude and notoriety of the miracles wrought by our blessed Saviour beyond those of Moses.—Which fully answers the objections of the Jews, that Christ wrought his miracles by Beelzebub: for then, as he said to them, “By whom do  
“ your children cast out devils?” Was it by the spirit of God, or Beelzebub, that Moses and the prophets wrought their miracles?

Then

Then from the purity and heavenliness of his doctrines, all levelled to destroy the kingdom of Satan, those wicked principles and idolatrous worship which he had set up in the world ; the other answer of our blessed Saviour concludes demonstratively, of a kingdom divided against itself; that if Satan cast out Satan to promote that doctrine which Christ taught, we must alter our notion of the devil, and suppose him to be good, and his kingdom must then be at an end ; which we see not yet done, for wickedness still reigns in the world.

#### IV. Object. *as to the HOLY TRINITY.*

Against these things reason has nothing to object, but then prejudices are raised up against what is revealed, as being of things that are above our reason, and out of its reach ; as chiefly the doctrine of the blessed Trinity.

In answer to which we may consider, that if such things were not above our reason, there needed no revelation of them, but only a bare proposal of them to our reason, made by any body without any authority, and their own evidence would carry them through.

In the next place, we must acknowledge that there are many things in the divine nature far out of the reach of our reason. That it must be  
so ;

so: for how can finite comprehend infinite? Who can think what eternity is? A duration without beginning, or succession of parts or time! Who can so much as imagine or frame any idea of a being, neither made itself, nor by any other? Of omnipresence? Of a boundless immensity? &c.

Yet all this reason obliges us to allow, as the necessary consequences of a first cause.

And where any thing is established upon the full proof of reason, there ten thousand objections or difficulties, though we cannot answer them, are of no force at all to overthrow it.— Nothing can do that, but to refute those reasons upon which it is established; till when the truth and certainty of the thing remains unshaken, though we cannot explain it, nor solve the difficulties that arises from it.

And if it is so, upon the point of reason, much more upon that of revelation, where the subject matter is above our reason, and could never have been found out by it.

All to be done in that case is, to satisfy ourselves of the truth of the fact, that such things were revealed of God, and are no imposture. This is done, as to the Holy Scriptures, by the four marks before-mentioned.

And as to the contradiction alledged in three being one, it is no contradiction, unless it be  
said,

said, that three are one, in the self-same respect : for in divers respects there is no sort of difficulty, that one may be three, or three thousand ; as one army may consist of many thousands, and yet it is but one army : there is but one human nature, and yet there are multitudes of persons who partake of that nature.

Now it is not said that the three persons in the divine nature are one person, that would be a contradiction : but it is said, that the three persons are one nature. They are not three and one in the same respect, they are three as to persons, and one as to nature. Here is no contradiction.

Again, that may be a contradiction in one nature, which is not so in another : for example ; it is a contradiction that a man can go two yards or miles as soon as one, because two is but one and another one : yet this is no contradiction to sight, which can reach a star as soon as the top of a chimney ; and the sun darts his rays in one instant from heaven to earth : but more than all these is the motion of thought, to which no distance of place is any interruption ; which can arrive at Japan as soon as at a yard's distance ; and can run into the immensity of possibilities.

Now there are no words possible, whereby to give any notion or idea of sight or light to a

man born blind : and consequently to reconcile the progress of sight or light to him from being an absolute contradiction ; because he can measure it no otherwise than according to the motion of legs or arms, for he knows none other ; therefore we cannot charge that as a contradiction in one nature, which is so in another, unless we understand both natures perfectly well ; and therefore we cannot charge that as contradiction in the incomprehensible nature of being three in one, though we found it to be so in our nature ; which we do not, because, as before-said, they are not three and one in the same respect.

Now, let us further consider, that though there is no comparison between finite and infinite, yet we have nearer resemblances of the three and one in God, than their is of sight to a man born blind. For there is nothing in any of the other four senses that has any resemblance at all to that of seeing, or that can give such a man any notion whatever of it.

But we find in our own nature, which is said to be made after the image of God, a very near resemblance of his Holy Trinity, and of the different operations of each of the Divine Persons.

For example : to know a thing present, and to remember what is past, and to love or hate,

are different operations of our mind, and performed by different faculties of it. Of these, the understanding is the father faculty, and gives being to things, as to us; for what we know not, is to us as if it were not. This answers to creation. From this faculty proceeds the second, that of memory, which is a preserving of what the understanding has created to us. Then the third faculty, that of the will, which loves or hates, proceeds from both the other; for we cannot love or hate what is not first created by the understanding, and preserved to us by the memory.

And though these are different faculties, and their operations different, that the second proceeds from the first, or is begotten by it; and the third proceeds from the first and second in conjunction, so that one is before the other in order of nature, yet not in time; for they are all congenial, and one is as soon in the soul as the other; and yet they make not three souls, but one soul. And though their operations are different, and the one proceeds from the other, yet no one can act without the other, and they all concur to every act of each; for in understanding and remembering, there is a concurrent act of the will to consent to such understanding or remembering, so that no one can act without the other; in which sense none is before or after the

the



the other, nor can any of them be or exist without the other.

But what we call faculties in the soul, we call persons in the Godhead : because there are personal actions attributed to each of them : as that of sending, and being sent ; to take flesh, and be born, &c.

And we have no other word whereby to express it ; we speak it after the manner of men ; nor could we understand, if we heard any of those unspeakable words, which express the Divine Nature in his proper essence ; therefore we must make allowances, and great ones, when we apply words of our nature to the infinite and eternal Being. We must not argue strictly and philosophically from them, more than from God's being said to repent, to be angry, &c. They are words *ad captum*, in condescension to our weak capacities, and without which we could not understand.

But this I say, that there are nearer resemblances afforded to us of this ineffable mystery of the Holy Trinity, than there is betwixt one of our outward senses and another, than there is to a blind man of colours, or of the motion of sight or fight : and a contradiction in the one will not infer a contradiction in the other ; though it is impossible to be solved, as in the

instance before given of a man born blind, till we come to know both natures distinctly.

And if we had not the experience of the different faculties of our mind, the contradiction would appear irreconcilable to all our philosophy, how three could be one, each distinct from the other, yet but one soul : one proceeding from, or being begot by the other ; and yet all coeval, and none before or after the other : and as to the difference betwixt faculties and persons, substance and subsistence, it is a puzzling piece of philosophy. And though we give not a distinct subsistence to a faculty, it has an existence, and one faculty can no more be another, than one person can be another : so that the case seems to be alike in both, as to what concerns our present difficulty of three and one ; besides what before is said, that by the word person, when applied to God, (for want of a proper word whereby to express it,) we must mean something infinitely different from personality among men. And therefore from a contradiction in the one (suppose it granted) we cannot charge a contradiction in the other, unless we understand it as well as the other : for how else can we draw the parallel ?

What a vain thing is our philosophy, when we would measure the incomprehensible nature by it ! When we find it non-plust in our own nature,

nature, and that in many instances. If I am all in one room, is it not a contradiction that any part of me should be in another room? Yet it was a common saying among philosophers, that the soul is all in all, and all in every part of the body: how is the same individual soul present, at one and the same time, to actuate the distant members of the body, without either multiplication or division of the soul? Is there any thing in the body can bear any resemblance to this, without a manifest contradiction? Nay, even as to bodies, is any thing more a self-evident principle, than that the cause must be before the effect? Yet the light and heat of the sun are as old as the sun; and supposing the sun to be eternal, they would be as eternal.

And as light and heat are of the nature of the sun, and as the three faculties before-mentioned are of the nature of the soul, so that the soul could not be a soul if it wanted any of them; so may we, from small things to great, apprehend without any contradiction, that the three persons are of the very nature and essence of the Deity; and so of the same substance with it; and though one proceeding from the other, (as the faculties of the soul do, yet that all three are co-substantial, co-eternal, and of necessary existence as God is; for that these three are God, and God is these three. As understand-

ing, memory, and will, are a soul; and a soul is understanding, memory, and will.

I intend (God willing) to treat of this subject more largely by itself; but I have said thus much here, to clear the way from that objection of rejecting revelation (though we are infallibly sure of the fact) because of the supposed contradiction to our reason, in comparing it with our earthly things.

#### *V. Of the Difference among Christians.*

But now that from all the proofs of the certainty of the revelation we are come to fix in Christianity, our labour is not yet at an end: for here you see multiplicity of sects and divisions, which our blessed Saviour foretold should come, for the probation of the elect: as some Canaanites were left in the land to teach the Israelites the use of war, lest by too profound a peace, they might grow lazy and stupid, and become an easy prey to their enemies. So might Christianity be lost among us: if we had nothing to do, it would dwindle and decay, and corrupt by degrees, as water stagnates by standing still: but when we are put to contend earnestly for the faith, it quickens our zeal, keeps us upon our guard, trims our lamp, and furbishes the sword  
of

of the spirit, which might otherwise rust in its scabbard. And it gives great opportunity to shew us the wonderful providence and protection of God over his church, in preserving her against a visibly unequal force. And in this contest, to some this high privilege is granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also suffer for his sake\*. These go to make up the noble army of martyrs and confessors, for ever triumphant in heaven. Others conquer even here on earth, that God's wonderful doings may be known to the children of men.

But as he who builds a tower, ought first to compute the expence, and he who goes to war to consider his strength; so our blessed Saviour has instructed us, that he who will be his disciple, must resolve beforehand to take up his cross daily, to forsake father and mother, and wife and children, and lands and life itself, when he cannot keep them with the truth and sincerity of the Gospel. Therefore we must put on the “ whole armour of God, that we may be  
“ able to stand in the evil day, and having over-  
“ come all, to stand; for we wrestle not against  
“ flesh and blood, but against principalities,  
“ against powers, against the rulers of the dark-

\* Phil. i. 29.

“ nefs of this world, againſt wicked ſpirits in  
“ high places.”

And what is it we wreſtle for? For the great myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the fleſh, &c.

## VI. *The Doctrine of SATISFACTION.*

Here is the foundation of the Chriſtian religion, that when man had ſinned, and was utterly unable to make any ſatisfaction for his ſin, God ſent his own Son to take upon him our fleſh, and in the ſame nature that offended, to make full ſatisfaction for the ſins of the whole world, by his perfect obedience, and the ſacrifice of himſelf upon the croſs.

Some ſay, what need any ſatisfaction? Might not God forgive without it? It would ſhew greater mercy. But theſe men conſider not that God is not only juſt, but he is juſtice itſelf; juſtice in the abſtract; he is eſſential juſtice. And juſtice, by its nature, muſt exact to the utmoſt farthing, elſe it were not juſtice; to remit is mercy, it is not juſtice; and the attributes of God muſt not fight and oppoſe each other: they muſt all ſtand infinite and complete. You may ſay then, how can God forgive at all? How can infinite mercy and juſtice ſtand together?

This



This question could never have been answered, if God himself had not shewed it to us in the wonderful œconomy of our redemption: for here is his justice satisfied to the least iota, by the perfect obedience and passion of Christ, (who is God) in the same human nature that offended. Here is infinite wisdom expressed in this means found out for our salvation; and infinite mercy in affording it to us. Thus all his attributes are satisfied, and filled up to the brim: they contradict not, but exalt each other. His mercy exalts and magnifies his justice: his justice exalts his mercy, and both his infinite wisdom.

Here is a view of God, beyond what all the oracles of reason could ever have found out, from his works of creation, or common providence! These shew his works, but this is his nature, it is himself! The very face of God! Before which the angels veil their faces, and desire to look into this abyss of goodness, and power, and wisdom, which they will never be able to fathom, but still feed upon, and search farther and farther into it, with adoration, to eternity! And they worship our manhood thus taken into God! And rejoice to be ministering spirits to us, while upon earth.

This you and I have talked over at large; and this I gave you as the sum and substance,

the Alpha and Omega, of the Christian religion. And now I repeat it as the surest criterion to guide a man in the difficulty before us, that is, in the choice of a church, in the midst of all that variety there is among Christians. Whoever hold not this doctrine, join not with them, nor bid them God speed.

### VII. *The SOCINIANS.*

This will save you from the Socinians, or the Unitarians, as they now call themselves in England, who expressly deny this doctrine; for they deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the Divinity of Christ, upon which it is founded. They consider Christ no otherwise than a mere man; and propose him only as a teacher and good example to us. But then they are confounded, with all their pretence to wit and reason, to give any account for his death, which was not necessary to teaching, or being an example: that an angel, or a prophet, might have been. Then they say that he died to confirm the truth of his doctrine. But set this doctrine of Satisfaction aside, and he taught nothing new, except the improvement of some morals: besides, dying does not confirm the truth of any doctrine; it only shews that he who dies for  
it

it does himself believe it. Some have died for errors: and the Socinian doctrine affords no comfort, no assurance to us. For if we consider Christ only as a teacher or example, we have not followed his precepts nor example: here is nothing but matter of condemnation to us. But if we look upon him as our surety, who has paid our debt, as our sacrifice, atonement, and propitiation for our sins, and that we are saved by his blood, (which is the language of the Holy Scriptures, of which the Socinians know no meaning) this is a rock and infallible assurance.

#### VIII. *The Church of ROME.*

As the Socinians have totally rejected this doctrine, so the Church of Rome has greatly vitiated and depressed it, by their doctrine of merit, and their own satisfaction, which they make part of their sacrament of penance. On this is founded their purgatory, wherein souls who had not made full satisfaction upon earth, must complete it there. They deny not the Satisfaction of Christ, but join their own with it, as if it were not sufficient.

## 2. The DISSENTERS.

On the other hand, our Dissenters run to the contrary extreme: and because our good works must have no share in the satisfaction for sin, which they cannot, as being unworthy, and mixed with our infirmities and our sin; therefore they make them not necessary, nor of any effect towards our salvation. They say that Christ did not die for any but the elect, in whom he sees no sin, let them live never so wickedly. They damn the far greatest part of the world by irreversibile decrees of reprobation, and say, that their good works are hateful to God, and that it is not possible in their power to be saved, let them believe as they will, and live never so religiously. They take away free-will in man, and make him a perfect machine. They make God the author of sin, to create men on purpose to damn them; and to punish them eternally for not doing what he had made impossible for them not to do. They make his promises and threatenings to be of no effect, nay, to be a sort of burlesquing, and insulting those whom he has made miserable; which is an hideous blasphemy!

*Why represent them as the victims For  
of dissenters in particular? They  
prevail as much among the members*

For a solution in this matter, both as to faith and works, I refer you to the homilies of faith and salvation, and of good works, where you will find the true Christian doctrine set forth clearly and solidly.

I will not anticipate what you design for your second part, by entering into other disputes there are among Christians; only these will be exceeding necessary, to settle well the notion of the Church of Christ, to which all do pretend in various manners.

#### *X. The true Notion of the CHURCH.*

First, therefore, the church must be considered not only a sect, that is, a company of people believing such and such tenets, like the several sects of the Heathen Philosophers; but as a society under government, with governors appointed by Christ, invested with such powers and authority, to admit into and exclude out of the society, and govern the affairs of the body.

This power was delegated by Christ to his Apostles and their successors to the end of the world: accordingly the Apostles did ordain Bishops in all the churches which they planted throughout the whole world, as the supreme  
governors,

governors, and center of unity, each in his own church. These were obliged to keep unity and communion with one another; which is therefore called Catholic Communion. And all these churches considered together, is the Catholic Church: as the several nations of the earth are called the world.

### XI. *Of an UNIVERSAL BISHOP.*

And Christ appointed no Universal Bishop over his church more than an Universal Monarch over the world. No such thing was known in the primitive church, till it was set up first by John, Bishop of Constantinople, then by the Bishop of Rome in the seventh century. And as the whole world is one kingdom to God, as it is written, "his kingdom ruleth over all," so the several churches of the world are one church to Christ. And the church of Rome's saying that she is that one church, or shew us another, which can dispute it with us, in universality, antiquity, &c. is the same as if France (for example) should say, who can compare with me? Therefore I am the Universal Monarch, or shew me another. The thing appears ridiculous at the first proposal; for it must be said to Rome, or to France, that  
if



if you were ten times greater than you are, you are yet but a part of the whole. And to say, who else pretends to it? Why none. And it would be nonsense in any one who did pretend to it. One part may be bigger than another; but one part can never be the whole. And all results in this, whether Christ did appoint an Universal Bishop over all the churches in the world? And we are willing to leave the issue to that, if it can appear either from the Scripture or antiquity. Besides, the reason of the thing; for as Gregory the Great urged against John, of Constantinople, if there was an Universal Bishop, the Universal Church must fall, if that one Universal Bishop fell; and so all must come to center in one poor, fallible, mortal man.

This obliged the Pope to run into another monstrous extreme, and set up for infallibility in his own person, as the only successor of St. Peter, and heir of those promises made to him, *super hanc petram, &c.* This was the current doctrine of the divines in the Church of Rome, in former ages, as you may see in Bellarmin, *de Rom. Pontif. l. 4. c. 5.* where he carries this so high as to assert, that if the Pope did command the practice of vice, and forbid virtue, the church were bound to believe that virtue was vice, and that vice was virtue. And in his

preface

preface he calls this absolute supremacy of the Pope, the *summa rei Christianæ*, the sum and foundation of the Christian religion. And that to deny it was not only a simple error, but a pernicious heresy.

This was old Popery : but now it is generally decried by the Papists themselves ; yet no Pope has been brought to renounce it, they will not quit claim.

When they departed from the infallibility of the Pope, they sought to place it in their General Councils : but these are not always in being ; and so their infallibility must drop for several ages together ; which will not consist with their argument, that God is obliged by his goodness, to afford always an outward and living judge and guide to his church. Besides, that instances are found, where those councils they call general, have contradicted one another.

For which reasons, others of them place the infallibility in the church diffusive : but this upon their scheme is indefinite, and the judge of controversy must be sought among numberless individuals, of whom no one is the judge or guide.

XII. *Of INFALLIBILITY in the Church.*

But there is an infallibility in the church, not personal in any one or all of Christians put together; for millions of fallibles can never make an infallible. But the infallibility consists in the nature of the evidence, which having all the four marks mentioned in the Short Method with the Deists, cannot possibly be false. As you and I believe there is such a town as Constantinople, that there was such a man as Henry VIII, as much as if we had seen them with our eyes: not from the credit of any historian or traveller, all of whom are fallible; but from the nature of the evidence, wherein it is impossible for men to have conspired and carried it on without contradiction, if it were false.

Thus, whatever doctrine has been taught in the church (according to the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis) *semper, ubique, & ab omnibus*, is the Christian doctrine; for in this case, such doctrine is a fact, and having the foresaid marks, must be a true fact, viz. that such doctrine was so taught and received.

This was the method taken in the council called at Alexandria against Arius; it was asked by Alexander, the Archbishop, who presided,

*Quis*

*Quis unquam talia audivit \* ?*" Who ever heard of this doctrine before? And it being answered by all the Bishops there assembled in the negative, it was concluded a novel doctrine, and contrary to what had been universally received in the Christian church. Thus every doctrine may be reduced to fact: for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not.

And a council assembled upon such an occasion, stand as evidences of the fact, not as judges of the faith; which they cannot alter by their votes or authority.

A council has authority in matters of discipline in the church; but in matters of faith, what is called their authority, is their attestation to the truth of fact; which if it has the marks before-mentioned, must be infallibly true: not from the infallibility of any or all of the persons, but from the nature of the evidence, as before is said.

And this is the surest rule, whereby to judge of doctrines, and to know what the Catholick church has believed and taught as received from the Apostles.

And they who refuse to be tried by this rule, who say, we care not what was believed by the Catholick church, either in former ages or now; we think our own interpretations or criticisms

\* Socrates, *Hist.* l. t. c. 5, Gr.

upon such a text, of as great authority as theirs ; these are justly to be suspected, nay, it is evident that they are broaching some novel doctrines, which cannot stand this test. Besides the monstrous arrogance in such a pretence, these overthrow the foundation of that sure and infallible evidence upon which Christianity itself does stand ; and reduce all to a blind enthusiasm.

### XIII. *Of* EPISCOPACY.

But further, Sir, in your search after a church, you must not only consider the doctrine, but the government ; that is, as I said before, you must consider the church, not only as a sect, but as a society : for though every society founded upon the belief of such tenets, may be called a sect, yet every sect is not a society. Now, a society cannot be without government, for it is that which makes a society : and a government cannot be without governors. The Apostles were instituted by Christ, the first governors of his church ; and with them and their successors he has promised to be to the end of the world. The Apostles did ordain Bishops as governors in all the churches which they planted throughout the whole world ; and these Bishops were esteemed the successors of the Apostles each in his own church,

church, from the beginning to this day. This was the current notion and language of antiquity; *Omnes Apostolorum successores sunt.* That all Bishops were the successors of the Apostles, as St. Jerome speaks, *Epist. ad Evagr.* And St. Ignatius, who was constituted by the Apostles Bishop of Antioch, salutes the church of the Trallians, *Ἐν τῷ πληρώματι ἐν Ἀποστολικῷ χαρακτῆρι;* *in the plenitude of the Apostolical character.* Thus it continued from the days of the Apostles to those of John Calvin; in all which time there was not any one church in the whole Christian world that was not episcopal. But now it is said by our Dissenters, that there is no need of succession from the Apostles, or those Bishops instituted by them: that they can make governors over themselves whom they list: and what signifies the government of the church, so the doctrine be pure? But this totally dissolves the church as a society, the government of which consists in the right and title of the governor. And as the Apostle says, “No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron\*.” And the dispute betwixt him and Korah was not as to any point either of doctrine or worship, but merely upon that of church government. And St. Jude, ver. 11,

\* Heb. v. 4.



brings down the same case to that of the church. And reason carries it as to all societies. They who will not obey the lawful governor, but set up another in opposition to him, are no longer of the society, but enemies to it, and justly forfeit all the rights and privileges of it.

Now considering that all the promises in the Gospel are made to the church, what a dreadful thing must it be to be excluded from all these!

Besides, the church is called the pillar and ground of the truth, as being a society instituted by Christ, for the support and preservation of the faith. This no particular church can attribute to itself, otherwise than as being a part of the whole: and therefore, as St. Cyprian says, "Christ made the college of Bishops  
" numerous, that if one proved heretical, or  
" sought to devour the flock, the rest might in-  
" terpose for the saving of it." This is equally against letting the whole depend upon one Universal Bishop; and against throwing off the whole episcopate, that is, all the Bishops in the world; which would be a total dissolution of the church as a society, by leaving no governors in it; or, which is the same, setting up governors of our own head, without any authority or succession from the Apostles; which is rendering the whole precarious, and without any foundation. And it is a supposing that Providence is

more obliged to stand by a church set up in direct opposition to his institution, than by that church which Christ himself has founded, and promised to be with it to the end of the world. And though he has permitted errors and heresies to overspread several parts of it, at several times, for the probation of the elect, like the waning of the moon, yet has he not left himself without witness, and has restored light to her, pursuant to his promise, that the gates of hell should not prevail against her: and this by the means of his servants and substitutes, the Bishops of his church, whom he has not deserted. All of whom, through the whole world always did, and still do maintain and own the Apostolic Creed. And wherein some, as the Arians, have perverted the sense of some articles, that lasted but a short time; and the truth has been more confirmed by it, in the unanimous consent and testimony of the whole episcopal college, to the primitive doctrine which they have received from the beginning. God healed these heresies in his own way, by the Bishops and Governors of his church, whom he had appointed, and without any infraction upon his own institution.

And it is observable that these heresies began by infraction, which men made upon his institution of Bishops, as Arius, an ambitious presbyter, first rose up against his Bishop, before he

was given up to that vile heresy, which he vented afterwards by degrees, to gain a party after him, thereby to maintain the opposition which he had made against his Bishop: and, by a last judgment, he fell from one error to another, till at last he completed that detestable heresy which bears his name.

And in all the annals of the church, whether under the law or the gospel, there is not one instance of a schism against the priesthood which God had appointed; but great errors in doctrine and worship did follow it. Thus the priesthood which Micah set up of his own head, and that which Jeroboam set up in opposition to that of Aaron, both ended in idolatry. Thus the novations and Donatists, who made schisms against their Bishops, fell into grievous errors, though they did not renounce the faith.

And into what gross errors, both as to doctrine and worship, has the church of Rome fallen, since her Bishop set up for universality, and thereby commenced that grand schism against all the Bishops of the earth, whom he sought to depress under him; but while he would thrust other churches from him, he thrust himself from the Catholic church.

What hydra heresies, and monstrous sects, (fifty or sixty at one time, of which we have the names) flowed like a torrent into England, in  
the

the times of forty one, after episcopacy was thrown down !

So evident is that saying, that the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, that we can hardly find any error which has come into the church, but upon an infraction made upon the episcopal authority.

#### *XIV. An infallible Demonstration of Episcopacy.*

For which this is to be said, that it has all the four marks before-mentioned, to ascertain any fact, in the concurrent testimony of all churches, at all times ; and therefore must infallibly be the government which the Apostles left upon the earth. To which we must adhere till a greater authority than theirs shall alter it.

I doubt not but that all this will determine you to the Church of England, and keep you firm to episcopacy, as a matter not indifferent.

And I pray God, that “ he who hath begun a good work in you, may perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

FINIS.

THE  
*Truth of Christianity*  
DEMONSTRATED,  
IN A  
DIALOGUE  
BETWIXT A  
CHRISTIAN AND A DEIST;  
*Wherein the Case of the JEWS is likewise  
considered.*

~~~~~  
BY THE LATE  
REV. CHARLES LESLIE, M.A.

/////////  
A NEW EDITION,  
*Published by Desire of the SOCIETY FOR  
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# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

PRESENT EDITION.

*The following Piece may be considered as a Sequel to A SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE DEISTS, by the same Author, lately republished by Desire of The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge ; with a PREFACE, by the Rev. W. JONES, M.A. Author of “ The Catholick Doctrine of the Trinity,” &c.*



THE  
TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY  
DEMONSTRATED.

---

(I.) CHRISTIAN,

**I**T is strange you should stand it out so against your own happiness, and employ your whole wit and skill to work in yourself a disbelief of any future rewards or punishments, only that you may live easy (as you think) in this world, and enjoy your pleasures. Which yet you cannot enjoy free and undisturbed from the fear of those things that are to come, the event of which you pretend not to be sure of; and therefore are sure of a life full of trouble, that admits not of any consolation, and of a miserable and wretched death, according to the utmost that you yourself propose.

DEIST. How can you say that, when I propose to live without any fear of those things? I fear not hell, and I have discarded the expectation of heaven, because I believe neither.

CHR. Are you sure there are no such things?

DE. That is a negative, and I pretend not to prove it.

CHR. Then you must remain in a doubt of it. And what a condition it is to die in this doubt, when the issue is eternal misery! And this is the utmost, by your own confession, that you can propose to yourself. Therefore I called yours a disbelief, rather than a belief of any thing. It is we Christians who believe, you Deists only disbelieve.

And if the event should prove as you would have it, and that we should all be annihilated at our death, we should be in as good a condition as you. But on the other side, if the event should prove as we expect it, then you are eternally miserable, and we eternally happy. Therefore one would think it the wisest part to take our side of the question; especially considering that those poor pleasures, for the sake of which you determine yourselves against us, are but mere amusements, and no real enjoyments. Nay, we had better be without them than have them, even as to this life itself. Is not temperance and a healthful constitution more  
pleasant

pleasant than those pains and aches, sick head and stomach, that are inseparable companions of debauchery and excess, besides the clouding our reason, and turning sottish in our understanding?

DE. We take pleasure in them for the time, and mind not the consequences.—But however, a man cannot believe as he pleases. And therefore, notwithstanding all the glorious and terrible things which you speak of, it makes nothing to me, unless you can evidently prove them to be so. And you must still leave me to judge for myself, after you have done all you can.

CHR. What I have said, is only to dispose you to hear me impartially, and not to be prejudiced against your own happiness, both here and hereafter.

(2.) DE. Well, without more prefacing, the case is this: I believe a God, as well as you; but for revelation, and what you call the Holy Scriptures, I may think they were wrote by pious and good men, who might take this method of speaking, as from God, and in his name, as supposing that those good thoughts came from Him, and that it would have a greater effect upon the people; and might couch their morals under histories of things supposed to be done, as several of the wise Heathens have

taken this course, in what they told of Jupiter and Juno, and the rest of their gods and goddesses. But as to the facts themselves, I believe the one no more than the other; or that all the facts in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or in Æsop's *Fables*, were true.

CHR. You seem willing by this to preserve a respectful esteem and value for the Holy Scriptures, as being wrote by pious and good men, and with a good design to reform the manners of men.

But your argument proves directly against the purpose for which you brought it, and makes the penmen of the Scriptures to be far from good men, to be not only cheats and impostors, but blasphemers, and an abomination before God. For such the same Scriptures frequently call those who presume to speak as from God, and in his name, when he had not sent them, and given them authority so to do. And the law in the Scriptures condemns such to be stoned to death as blasphemers.

It was not so with the Heathens, their moralists did not use the style of "Thus saith the Lord;" and their philosophers opposed and wrote against one another without any offence. For all the matter was which of them could reason best; they pretended to no more.

And for the facts of the fables of their gods,  
themselves



themselves did not believe them, and have wrote the mythology or moral that was intended by them.

DE. But many of the common people did believe the facts themselves. As it is with the common people now in the church of Rome, who believe the most senseless and ridiculous stories in their books of legends to be as true as the Gospel; though the more wise among them call them only pious frauds, to encrease the devotion of the people. And so we think of your Gospel itself, and all the other books you say were wrote by men divinely inspired. We will let you keep them to cajole the mob, but when you would impose them upon men of sense, we must come to the test with you.

CHR. That is what I desire; and to see whether there are no more evidences to be given for the truth of Christianity, that is, of the Holy Scriptures, than are given for the legends, and all the fabulous stories of the Heathen gods. And if so, I will give up my argument, and confess that it is not in my power to convince you.

DE. I cannot refuse to join issue with you upon this. To begin, then, I desire to know your evidences for the truth of your Scriptures, and the facts therein related,

(3.) CHR. If the truth of the book, and the facts therein related be proved, I suppose you will not deny the doctrines to be true.

DE. No: for if I saw such miracles with my eyes as are said to have been done by Moses and Christ, I could not think of any greater proof to be given, that such an one was sent of God. Therefore, if your Bible be true as to the facts, I must believe it in the doctrine too. But there are other books which pretend to give us revelations from God, and we must know which of these is true.

CHR. To distinguish this book from all others which pretend to give revelations from God, these four marks or rules were set down.

I. That the facts related be such of which men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may judge.

[This cuts off enthusiastical pretences to revelation, and opinions which may be propagated in the dark, and like the tares, not known till they are grown up, and the first beginning of them not discovered.]

II. That these facts be done openly in the face of the world.

III. That not only public monuments, but outward institutions and actions should be appointed, and perpetually kept up in memory of them.

IV. That

IV. That these institutions to be observed should commence from the time that the facts were done; and consequently that the book wherein these facts and institutions are recorded, should be written at the time, and by those who did the facts, or by eye and ear-witnesses. For that is included in this mark, and is the main part of it; to prevent false stories being coined in after ages of things done many hundred years before, which none alive can disprove. Thus Moses wrote his five books containing his actions and institutions; and those of Christ were wrote by his disciples, who were eye and ear-witnesses of what they related. And particular care was taken of this, as you may see, Acts i. 21, 22, upon choosing one to supply the place of Judas. “Wherefore of these men which  
“ have companied with us, all the time that  
“ the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,  
“ beginning from the baptism of John, until  
“ that same day that he was taken from us, must  
“ one be ordained to be a witness with us of  
“ his resurrection.” And St. John begins his first Epistle thus: “That which was from the  
“ beginning, which we have heard, which we  
“ have seen with our eyes, which we have  
“ looked upon, and our hands have handled—  
“ That which we have seen and heard declare  
“ we unto you.”

I have explained this fourth mark, because the author of the detection, either wilfully or ignorantly, seems not to understand it. And this alone overthrows all the stories he has told, which he would make parallel to the facts of Moses and of Christ; and therefore alledges that they have all these four marks. But he must begin again, and own that these four marks still stand an irrefragable proof of the truth of any fact which has them all, till he can produce a book which was wrote by the actors or eye-witnesses of the facts it relates, and shew that such facts, having the other three marks, have been detected to be false. Which when he can do, I will give him up these four marks as an insufficient proof, and own I was mistaken in them. But hitherto they have stood the test; for he himself will not say, he has produced any such book in all his detection.

If he says that facts may be true, though no such book can be produced for them, and though they have not all the aforesaid marks, I will easily grant it. But all I contend for is, that whatever has all these four marks, cannot be false. For example; could Moses have persuaded six hundred thousand men that he had led them through the sea in the manner related in Exodus, if it had not been true? If he could, it would have been a greater miracle than the  
other.

other. The like of their being fed forty years in the wilderness without bread, by manna rained down to them from heaven. The like of Christ's feeding five thousand at a time with five loaves; and so of all the rest. The two first marks secure from any cheat or imposture at the time the facts were done, and the two last marks secure equally from any imposition in after ages, because this book, which relates these facts speaks of itself as written at that time by the actors or eye-witnesses, and as commanded by God to be carefully kept and preserved to all generations, and read publicly to all the people, at stated times, as is commanded, Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, 12. And was practised, Josh. viii. 34, 35. Neh. viii. &c. And the institutions appointed in this book were to be perpetually observed from the day of the institution for ever among these people, in memory of the facts, as the passover, Exod. xii. and so of the rest. Now suppose this book to have been forged a thousand years after Moses, would not every one say when it first appeared, we never heard of this book before, we know of no such institutions, as of a passover, or circumcision, or sabbaths, and the many feasts and fasts therein appointed, of a tribe of Levi, and a tabernacle wherein they were to serve in such an order of Priesthood, &c. Therefore this book must be

an errant forgery, for it wants all those marks it gives of itself, as to its own continuance, and of those institutions it relates. No instance can be shewn since the world began of any book so circumstantiated, that was a forgery, and passed as truth upon any people. I think it impossible; and therefore that the four marks are still an invincible proof of the truth of that book, and those facts wherein all these marks do meet.

But since I am come upon this subject again, I will endeavour to improve it, and give four other marks, some of which no fact, however true, ever had, or can have, but the fact of Christ alone. Thus while I support the fact of Moses, I set that of Christ above him, as the lord is above the servant. And the Jews being herein principally concerned, I will consider their case likewise as we go along; therefore I add this fifth mark as peculiar to our Bible, and to distinguish it from all other histories which relate facts formerly done.

(V.) That the book which relates the facts contains likewise the law of that people to whom it belongs, and be their statute book by which their causes are determined. This will make it impossible for any to coin or forge such a book, so as to make it pass upon any people. For example; If I should forge a statute book for England, and publish it next term, could I  
make



make all the judges, lawyers, and people believe, that this was their true and only statute-book by which their causes had been determined these many hundred years past? They must forget their old statute-book, and believe that this new book, which they never saw or heard of before, was that same old book which has been pleaded in Westminster-Hall for so many ages, which has been so often printed, and the originals of which are now kept in the Tower, to be consulted as there is occasion.

DE. I grant that to be impossible. But how do you apply it?

CHR. It is evident as to the books of Moses, which are not only a history of the Jews, but their very statute-book, wherein their municipal law, as well civil as ecclesiastical, was contained.

DE. This is so indeed as to the books of Moses, to which they always appealed: "To the law and to the Testimony." And they had no other statute-book. But this will not agree to your Gospel, which is no municipal law, nor any civil law at all, and no civil causes were tried by it.

CHR. The law was given to the Jews, as a distinct and separate people from all other nations upon the earth; and therefore was a municipal law particularly for that nation only of the Jews.

But

But Christianity was to extend to all the nations of the earth ; and Christians were to be gathered out of all nations ; and therefore the Gospel could not be a municipal law as to civil rights to all nations, who had each their own municipal laws. This could not be without destroying all the municipal laws in the world, of every nation whatsoever ; and then none could be a Christian, without at the same time becoming a rebel to the government where he lived. This would have been for Christ to have immediately set up for universal and temporal King of all the world, as the Jews expected of their Messiah, and therefore would have made Christ a King. | But he instructed them in the spiritual nature of his kingdom, that it was not “ of this world,” nor did respect their temporal or civil matters ; which therefore he left in the same state he found them, and commanded their obedience to their civil governors, though Heathen, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. And as to the law of Moses, he left the Jews still under it, as to their civil concerns, so far as the Romans under whose subjection they then were, would permit them. As Pilate said to them, “ Ye have a law ; and “ judge ye him according to your law.”

But the Gospel was given as the spiritual and ecclesiastical law to the Church whithersoever dispersed

- dispersed through all nations ; for that did not interfere with their temporal laws, as to civil government. And in this the fifth mark is made stronger to the Gospel than even to the law ; for it is easier to suppose that any forgery might creep into the municipal law of a particular nation, than that all the nations whither Christianity is spread should conspire in the corruption of the Gospel, which to all Christians is of infinitely greater concern than their temporal laws. And without such a concert of all Christian nations and people supposed, no such forgery could pass undiscovered in the Gospel, which is spread as far as Christianity, and read daily in their public offices.

DE. But I say it is discovered, as appears by the multitude of your various lections.

CHR. That cannot be called a forgery ; it is nothing but such mistakes as may very easily happen, and are almost unavoidable, in so many copies as have been made of the Gospel, before printing was known. And considering the many translations of it into several languages, where the idioms are different, and phrases may be mistaken, together with the natural slips of amanuenses, it is much more wonderful that there are no more various lections, than that there are so many.

But in this appears the great providence of  
God

God in the care the Christians took of this, that they have marked every the least various lection, even syllabical : and that among all these there is not found one which makes any alteration either in the facts, or in the doctrines. So that instead of an objection, this becomes a strong confirmation of the truth and certainty of the Gospel, which stands thus perfectly clear of so much as any doubt concerning the facts or the doctrines therein related.

But I will now proceed to a stronger evidence than even this, and all that has been said before ; which I have made the sixth mark, and that is the topic of prophecy.

(VI.) The great fact of Christ's coming into the world was prophesied of in the Old Testament from the beginning to the end, as it is said, Luke i. 70. " By all the holy prophets " which have been since the world began."

This evidence no other fact ever had; for there was no prophecy of Moses, but Moses himself did prophecy of Christ, Deut. xviii. 15. (applied Acts iii. 22, 23, 24.) and sets down the several promises given of him. The first was to Adam, immediately after the fall, Gen. iii. 15, where he is called the seed of the woman, but not of the man, because he was to have no man for his father, though he had a woman to his mother. And of none other can this be said,  
nor

nor that he should “bruise the serpent’s head,” that is, overcome the devil and all his power.

He was again promised to Abraham, as you may see, Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. See this applied Gal. iii. 16.

Jacob did expressly prophesy of him, with a mark of the time when he should come, and calls him “Shiloh,” or “He that was to be sent.” Gen. xlix. 10.

Balaam prophesied of him by the name of the star of Jacob, and sceptre of Israel. Numb. xxiv. 17.

Daniel calls him the Messiah, the Prince; and tells the time of his coming, and of his death, Dan. ix. 25, 26.

It was foretold that he should be born of a virgin, Isa. vii. 14. In the city of Bethlehem, Micah v. 2. Of the seed of Jesse, Isa. xi. 1. 10. His low estate and sufferings are particularly described, Psal. xxii. and Isa. liii. And his resurrection, Psal. xvi. 10. That he should sit upon the throne of David for ever, and be called “Wonderful,” the “Mighty God,” the “Prince of Peace,” Isa. ix. 6, 7. “The Lord our righteousness,” Jer. xxxiii. 16. Jehovah Tsidkenu, (an incommunicable name given to none but the great God alone.) And Immanuel, that is, “God with us,” Isa. vii. 14. And David whose son he was, according to the flesh, called him his lord, Psal. cx. 1.

The cause of his sufferings is said to be for the sins of the people, and not for himself, Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6. Dan. ix. 26.

And as to the time of his coming, it is expressly said, (to the confusion of the Jews now) that it was to be before the sceptre should depart from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. In the second temple, Hag. ii. 7, 9. Within seventy weeks of the building of it, Dan. ix. 24, that is, (according to the prophetic known stile of a day for a year) within four hundred and ninety years after.

(1) From these and many more prophecies of the Messiah or Christ, his coming was the general expectation of the Jews from the beginning, but more especially about the time in which it was foretold he should come, when several false Messiahs did appear among them. And this expectation still remains with them, though they confess that the time foretold by all the Prophets for his coming, is past.

But what I have next to offer will be more strange to you. You may say it was natural for the Jews to expect their Messiah, who was prophesied of in their book of the law, and was to be a Jew, and King of all the earth. But what had the Gentiles to do with this? There were no prophecies to them.

Therefore what I have to shew you is, that  
these



these prophecies of the Messiah were likewise to the Gentiles. For it is said he should be the expectation of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews. And Gen. xlix. 10. That the gathering of the people (or nations) should be to him. In the vulgar it is rendered *expectatio gentium*. “The expectation of the Gentiles.” He is called “the desire of all nations,” Hag. ii. 7. And I will shew you the general expectation the Gentiles had of his coming, about the time that he did come.

They knew him by the name of the East. Their tradition was, that the East should prevail, *ut valesceret oriens*, as I will shew you presently. But first let me tell you, that the Holy Scripture often alludes to him under this denomination. The blood of the great expiatory sacrifice was to be sprinkled towards the East, Lev. xvi. 14, to shew whence the true expiatory sacrifice should come. And he is thus frequently stiled in the Prophets. Zech. iii. 8. It is said, according to the vulgar, “I will bring forth my servant the East.” And chap. vi. 12. “Behold the man whose name is the East.” Our English renders it in both places the branch, for the Hebrew word bears both senses. But the Greek renders it *Ἀνατολή*, which we translate the “day spring,” Luke i. 78. and put on the margin sun-rising or branch.

The

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The vulgar has it *oriens ex alto*, the East or Sun-rising from on high. He is called the "Sun of righteousness," Mal. iv. 2. And it is said, Isa. lx. 3. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

(2.) Now, Sir, how literally was this fulfilled in the Magi (generally supposed to be Kings) coming from the East, led by a star which appeared to them in the East, to worship Christ when he was born, and to bring presents unto him as unto a king? As it is told in the second of St. Matthew.

DE. Why do you quote St. Matthew to me? You know we make no more of him than of one of your legend writers, and believe this story no more than that these three kings are now buried at Cologne.

(3.) CHR. You make great use of the legends, and answer every thing by them; and I confess they are the greatest affront to Christianity, and (if possible) a disproof of it, as it must be to those who will place them upon the same foot with the Holy Bible, as too many do in the Church of Rome, and cry, we have the authority of the Church for both. And they are taught to receive the Holy Scriptures upon  
the

the authority of the Church only. But my business is not with them now; I shall only say, that when they can bring such evidences for the truth of their legends, or for any particular fact in them, as I do for the Holy Scriptures, and in particular for the fact of Christ, then I will believe them.

DE. Will you believe nothing that has not all these evidences you produce?

(4.) CHR. Far from it: for then I must believe nothing but this single fact of Christ: because no other fact in the world, no, not of all those recorded in Holy Scriptures, has all these evidences which the fact of Christ has. And so God has thought fitting, that this great fact above all other facts, of the greatest glory to God, and importance to mankind, should appear with greater and more undeniable evidence than any other fact ever was in the world.

DE. We are now upon the particular fact of the Magi or wise men coming to Christ. Have you any more to say as to that?

(5.) CHR. It has those same evidences that the truth of the Bible in general has, which are more than can be produced for any other book in the world. But now as to this fact in particular, St. Matthew was the first who wrote the

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Gospel, and it was in the same age when this fact was said to be done. And can you think it possible that such a fact as this could have passed without contradiction, and a public exposing of Christianity, then so desirable and so much endeavoured by the unbelieving Jews, their high-priests, elders, &c. as the only means for their own preservation, if the fact had not been notorious and fresh in the memory of all the people then at Jerusalem, viz. that these wise men came thither, and that Herod and the whole city were troubled at the news they brought of the birth of the King of the Jews; that Herod thereupon gathered all the chief Priests and Scribes of the people together, that they might search out of the Prophets, and know the place where Christ should be born; and then the slaughter of the infants in and about Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, which followed—I say could such a fact as this have passed at that very time, if it had not been true? Could St. Matthew have hoped to have palmed this upon all the people, and upon those very same chief Priests and Scribes who, he said, were so far concerned in it? Would none of them have contradicted it, if it had been a forgery? Especially when the detecting it would have strangled Christianity in its birth? Would not they have done it who suborned false witnesses

4

against

against Christ, and gave large money to the soldiers to conceal (if possible) his resurrection? Would not they have done it, who persecuted Christianity with all spite and fury, and invented all imaginable false stories and calumnies against it? Whereas here was one at hand, this of the Magi, which, if false, could have been so easily detected, by appealing to every man, woman, and child, I may say, in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and even in all Judea; who, no doubt, had heard of the terrible massacre of so many infants, and the cause of it.

DE. I can give no account why the writers against Christianity did not offer to contradict this fact of the star and the Magi, which is put in the very front of this Gospel of St. Matthew. And there it is called his (Christ's) star. "We have seen his star in the East."—As if God had created a new and extraordinary star on purpose, as the signal of Christ hung out in the heavens, to give the world notice of his birth. But did none of the heathen Philosophers take notice of this star, or of his relation given of it by your St. Matthew?

(6.) CHR. Yes. For Chalcidius in his comment upon Plato's Timæus, speaking of the presages of stars mentioned by Plato, adds as a further proof, *Est quoque alia venerabilior &*

*sanctior historia.*—There is likewise another more venerable and holy history, by which I doubt not he means this of St. Matthew ; for what he tells seems to be taken out of it, “ That by  
 “ the rising of a certain unusual star, not plagues  
 “ and diseases, but the descent of the venerable  
 “ God, for the salvation and benefit of mortals,  
 “ was observed by the Chaldeans, who wor-  
 “ shipped this God newly born, by offering  
 “ gifts unto him.”

DE. This makes those Magi or wise men to have been Chaldeans, who I know were the most noted then in the world for the most curious learning, particularly in astronomy. And they were likewise East of Jerusalem, so that it might be well said they came from the East, and had seen his star in the East. But I cannot imagine how they should read the birth of a God in the face of a new star : and how that star should send them particularly to Jerusalem, though I may suppose it pointed them westward.

(7.) CHR. This will be easier to you, when you know, that all over the East there was a tradition, or fixed opinion, that about that time a King of the Jews would be born, who should rule the whole earth. And the appearance of this extraordinary star in the East was taken by them as a sign that he was then born. And



whither should they go look for the King of the Jews, but to Jerusalem? And when they came thither they enquired, saying, “Where  
“ is he that is born King of the Jews? For we  
“ have seen his star in the East, and are come  
“ to worship him.” This made Herod gather the Priests and Scribes together. And they by searching the Prophets found that Bethlehem was the place; whereupon the wise men went to Bethlehem; and to convince them that they were right, the star which they had seen in the East appeared to them again, and, “went before  
“ them till it came and stood over where the  
“ young child was.” This made them “rejoice  
“ with such an exceeding great joy.”

DE. This would go down in some measure with me, if you could make good your first *postulatum*, of such a current tradition or opinion in the East; but for this you have given no sort of proof. And all the rest which you have inferred from thence must come to the ground with it, if it be not supported. I confess it would seem as strange to me as the star to the wise men, if God had (we know not how, it is unaccountable to us) sent such a notion into the minds of men, and at that time only, of such a King to be born, and that he should be a Jew, (the then most contemptible people in the world, subdued and conquered by the Ro-  
mans)

mans) and that he was to be King of the Jews, and thence to become King of all the earth, and conquer his conquerors. The Romans would have looked with disdain upon such a notion of prophecy as this; it would have made some stir among them, if they had heard of it, or given any credit to it.

(8.) CHR. You argue right; and I will shew you what stir it made among them, and I hope you will take their word, as well for this Eastern tradition, as for the effects it had among themselves. Nay, they wanted not the same tradition among themselves, and express prophecies of it in their Sibyls, and otherwise. So that the same expectation of the Messiah was then current over all the earth, with the Gentiles as well as with the Jews.

Tacitus in his History, l. v. c. 13. speaking of the great prodigies that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, says that many understood these as the forerunners of that extraordinary Person whom the ancient books of the Priests did foretel should come about that time from Judea, and obtain the universal dominion; his words are, "*Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur:*" i. e. "Many were persuaded that

that it was contained in the old writings of the Priests, that at that very time the East should prevail, and the Jews should have the dominion." And Suetonius in the Life of Vespasian, c. i. n. 4. says, "*Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur;*" i. e. "That it was an ancient and constant opinion (or tradition) throughout the whole East, that at that time those who came from Judea should obtain the dominion;" that is, some Jew should be universal king. Therefore Cicero, who was a commonwealths-man, in his second book of Divination, speaking of the books of the Sibyls who likewise foretold this great King to come, says, "*Cum antistibus agamus, & quidvis potius ex illis libris, quam regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc nec Dii, nec homines esse patientur;*" i. e.— "Let us deal with these Priests, and let them bring any thing out of their books, rather than a king: whom neither the Gods nor men will suffer after this at Rome."

But he was mistaken, and had his head cut off for writing against kingly government. And others more considerable than he laid greater stress upon these prophecies, even the whole Senate of Rome, as I come to shew you.

Whether these Sibyls gathered their prophecies out of the Old Testament, is needless here

to examine. I am now only upon that general expectation which was then in the world of this great and universal King to come about that time.

(9.) The same year that Pompey took Jerusalem, one of these oracles of the Sibyls made a great noise, which was, "That nature was about to bring forth a King to the Romans." Which, as Suetonius relates in the Life of Augustus, c. 94. did so terrify the Senate, that they made a decree to expose, that is, destroy all the children born that year. *Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur.* That none born that year should be brought up, but exposed, that is, left in some wood or desert place to perish. But he tells how this dreadful sentence was prevented. *Eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, qual ad se quisque spem traheret, curasse ne Senatus consultum ad ærarium deferretur.* That those Senators whose wives were with child, because each was in hopes of having this great King, took care that the decree of the Senate should not be put into the ærarium or treasury, without which, by their constitution, the decree could not be put in execution. And Appian, Plutarch, Sallust, and Cicero, do all say, that it was this prophecy of the Sibyls which raised the ambition of Corn. Lentulus

tulus at that time hoping that he should be this King of the Romans. Virgil, a few years before the birth of Christ, in his 4th Eclogue, quotes a prophecy of one of these Sibyls speaking of an extraordinary person to be born about that time, who should introduce a golden age into the world, and restore all things, and should blot out our sins.

—*Si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri.*

And calls him,

*Chara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.*

Dear offspring of the Gods, and great son of Jove.

He describes a new state of things like the “new heavens” and “new earth,” Isa. lxx. 17.

*Magnas ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo.*

A great order of ages does begin, wholly new.

And as Isaiah describes the happy state in the “new earth,” that “the lion and the lamb should feed together, the serpent eat dust, and that they should not hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain,” Isai. lxx. 25. Virgil does almost repeat his words :

— *Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.*

*Occidet & serpens, & fallax herba veneni*  
*Occidet.*——

And as God introduces the Messiah with saying, “ I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea,” Hag. ii. 7. Virgil does in a manner translate it in this Eclogue, introducing the great person then to be born, and the joy which should be in the whole creation.

*Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,*  
*Terrasq; tractusq; maris, cælumq; profundum.*  
*Aspice venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo.*

Lo ! teeming nature bending with its load,  
The earth, the ocean, and the heavens high,  
Behold how all rejoice to greet the coming age.

Here the poet describes nature as in labour to bring forth this great King, as the other Prophecy of the Sibyls before-mentioned speaks. And he says, *Aderit jam tempus.* That the time was then at hand.

*Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.*

Now a new progeny from heaven descends.

And he applies it to Saloninus, the son of Polli the consul, then newly born, as if it was to be  
fulfilled



fulfilled in him. But as there was nothing like it in the event ; so these words are too great to be applied to any mortal, or the reign of any King that ever was in the world ; or to any other but to the Messiah, the Lord of heaven and earth.

(10.) DE. But you know the authority of these Sibyls is disputed. Some say the Christians did interpolate them, and added to them in about a hundred years after Christ.

CHR. It is true, the Christians did often quote them against the Heathens, as St. Paul quoted the Heathen Poets to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 28. And Clem. Alexandrinus in his Strom. l. 6. says, that St. Paul quoted the Sibyls likewise in his Disputations with the Gentiles. And the Christians were called Sibyllianists, from their quoting the Sibyls so often. But Origen, in his answer to Celsus, l. 7. challenges him to shew any interpolation made by the Christians, and appeals to the Heathen copies which were in their own possession, and kept with great care.

But what I have quoted to you out of Virgil was before Christ was born, and therefore clear of all these objections.

DE. Then the Jews must have had some hand in them. As likewise in that Eastern tradition you have spoken of.

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CHR. If so, you must suppose that the Jews had it from their own Prophets. And this will be a strong confirmation that the time of the Messiah's coming as plainly told in the prophets.

(11.) DE. What say the Jews to this? For I cannot imagine how they can get off of it.

CHR. Some of them say, that the Messiah put off his coming at the appointed time, because of their sins. Others say, he did come at the time, but has concealed himself ever since.

DE. These are mere excuses. Do they pretend any prophecy for this? But to what purpose? For these excuses shew, that prophecies are no proofs, because if they may be thus put off, they can never be known. And they may be put off and put off to the end of the world.

(12.) CHR. But now, Sir, as to your point. If this general expectation, both east and west, of the great King of the Jews to be born about that very time that he did come, was occasioned by the Jewish tradition of it, strengthens the truth of the Holy Scriptures, whence the Jews had it. But otherwise, if God, we know not how, did send such a notion into the minds of  
men,

men, all over the world, at that particular time, and never the like, either before or since, then the miracle will be greater, and the attestation to the coming of Christ stronger, and as you said, it will be more wonderful and more convincing to you, than the star was to the wise men in the east.

DE. I must take time to answer this. I made nothing at all of this of the Magi, and the star, and of Herod's slaying the infants upon it. I thought it a ridiculous story, and to have no foundation in the world. But when I see Suetonius telling us of the decree of the Senate of Rome to destroy all the children born that year, and for the same reason, for fear of this great King that was then to be born; I must think there was a strange chiming in of things here, one to answer the other. I know not how it happened. By chance, or how!

(13.) CHR. You cannot imagine there could be any concert in this matter. That the Chaldeans, and Romans, and Jews, should all agree upon the point, and hit it so exactly, without any one of them discovering the contrivance! especially when it was so terrible to both the Romans and the Jews, that they took such desperate methods to prevent it as to destroy their own children!

DE. It is ridiculous to talk of a concert. I will not put my cause upon that. Would they concert what they thought their own destruction? Besides, the Jews and Romans were then enemies; and the Chaldeans were far off, and had little correspondence with either of them. And such an universal notion could not be concerted. Whole nations could not be trusted with a secret. And if they all kept it, and against their own interest too, it would be as great a miracle as any in your Bible.

(14.) CHR. How much more impossible is it to suppose, that there should be a concert between different ages, between all the ages from Adam downwards, in all those prophecies of the coming of the Messiah? How should they know it but by revelation? And would they have all agreed so exactly as to the time, place, manner, and other circumstances, if it had been a forgery contrived by different persons and in different ages?

(15.) This is an argument which St. Peter thought stronger than the conviction even of our outward senses, for having set down what he and the other two Apostles had both seen and heard upon the holy Mount, he adds, “We have  
“ yet a more sure word (that is, a stronger  
“ proof) of prophecy, whereunto ye do well

“ to

“ to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in  
“ a dark place, until the day dawn, and the  
“ day-star arise in your hearts.” 2 Pet. i. 19.—  
And he enforces it thus, “ For the prophecy  
“ came not in old time by the will of man, but  
“ holy men of God spake as they were moved  
“ by the Holy Ghost.”

DE. I will grant his argument so far, that it is easier to suppose the senses of three men, or of all the men in the world to be imposed upon, than that Adam, Abraham, and I had concerted together. But I will not give you my answer yet. Have you any more to say upon this head of prophecy?

CHR. I need say no more till your answer comes. For you have granted that this proof is stronger than what we see with our eyes.

(16.) But that your answer may take in all together, I will give you something further. I have set down already some of the great prophecies of the coming of Christ, his sufferings, death, and resurrection. But there are others which reach to several minute circumstances, such as cannot be applied to any other fact that ever yet happened, and which could not have been foreseen by any but God; nor were known by the actors who did them, else they had not done them. For they would not have fulfilled the  
Prophecies

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Prophecies that went before of Christ, in applying them to him whom they crucified as a false Christ.

See then how literally several of these Prophecies were fulfilled. As Psal. lxi. 21.—  
“ They gave me gall to eat and vinegar to  
“ drink.” Then read Matt. xxvii. 34. “ They  
“ gave him vinegar to drink mingled with  
“ gall.” It is said, Psa. xxii. 16, 17, 18. “ They  
“ pierced my hands and my feet—They stand  
“ staring and looking upon me. They part my  
“ garments among them, and cast lots upon  
“ my vesture.” As if it had been wrote after  
John xix. 23, 24. It was merely accidental in  
the soldiers, they would not tear his coat, because  
it was woven and without seam, therefore they  
cast lots for it: thus fulfilling this Scripture,  
without any knowledge of theirs, for they were  
Roman soldiers, and knew nothing of the Scrip-  
ture. Again it is said, Psal. xxii. 7, 8. “ All  
“ they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they  
“ shoot out their lips and shake their heads,  
“ saying, He trusted in God that he would de-  
“ liver him: let him deliver him if he will  
“ have him.” Compare this with Matt. xxvii.  
39, 41, 42, 43. “ And they that passed by re-  
“ viled him, wagging their heads, and saying—  
“ Come down from the cross. Likewise also the  
“ chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and  
“ elders,



“ elders, said—He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God.” It is said again, Zech. xi. 10. “ They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.” His very price was foretold, and how the money should be disposed of, Zech. xi. 13. fulfilled Matt. xxvii. 6, 7. And his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, Zech. ix. 9. which the learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah. That he should suffer with malefactors, Isai. liii. 12. That his body should not lie so long in the grave as to see corruption, Psal. xvi. 10.

Many other circumstances are told which cannot be applied to any but to Christ. I have set down these few, that you may take them into consideration when you think fit to give your answer as to this head of Prophecies.

And you are to take care to find some other fact guarded with Prophecies like this. Or else you must confess that there is no other fact that has such evidence as this.

(17.) But before I leave this head, I must mention the Prophecies in our Bible of things yet to come to the end of the world, and of the new heavens and new earth that shall succeed.

DE. These can be no proofs here, because we cannot see the fulfilling of them.

CHR. You may believe what is to come, by the fulfilling you have seen of what is past. But I bring this now to shew you, that there is no other law or history in the world that so much as pretends to this, or to know what is to come. This is peculiar to the Holy Bible, as being written from the mouth of God.

You have seen how the current of the Prophecies of the Old Testament did point at and center in that great event the coming of the Messiah.

When he was come, then he told us more plainly of what was to come after him, even to the consummation of all things. And by what we have seen exactly fulfilled of all he told us to this time, we must believe what remains yet to come.

(18.) How particularly did he foretel the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Matt. xxiv. And that that age should not pass till it should be fulfilled? And his very expression was literally fulfilled. That there should not be left one stone upon another in the temple, for the very foundations of it were ploughed up by Turnus Rufus. See Scaliger's Canon. Isagog. p. 304.

When Jerusalem was first besieged it was full of Christians. But the siege was raised unaccountably

countably and for no reason that history gives. In which time the Christians seeing those signs come to pass which Christ had foretold would precede its destruction, and particularly laying hold of that caution he gave, “Then let them” “that are in Judea flee to the mountains”, and that in such haste, as that he that was in the field was not to return (to Jerusalem) to fetch his garment, or he on the house top there to stay to take his goods with him; accordingly all the Christians left Jerusalem, and fled to Pella, a city in the Mountains. And as soon as they were all gone, the Romans returned and renewed the siege. And so it came to pass, that when Titus sacked the city there was not one Christian found there, and the destruction fell only upon the unbelieving Jews. The others escaped, as Lot out of Sodom, by believing the prediction of that ruin.

(19.) Another very remarkable prediction of our blessed Lord in that same chapter was of the many false Christs that should come after him; and he warned the Jews not to follow them, for that it would be to their destruction. “Behold,” (says he, ver. 25.) I have told you before.” But they would not believe him; and accordingly it came to pass. Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews, l. xviii. c. 12. l. xx. c. 6. And De Bell.

Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 31. tells of abundance of these false Messiahs, who appeared before the destruction of Jerusalem, and led the people into the wilderness, where they were miserably destroyed. The very thing of which our Saviour cautioned them, ver. 26. "If they say unto you, Behold, he (that is Christ) is in the desert, go not forth." And De Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 12. Josephus says, that the chief cause of their obstinacy in that war with the Romans, was their expectation of a Messiah to come and deliver them, which brought on their ruin, and made them deaf to the offers of Titus, who courted them to peace.

And since the destruction of Jerusalem there have been so many false Messiahs, that Johannes à Lent has wrote a history of them, printed Herbonæ, 1697. Which brings them down as far as the year 1682. And tells the lamentable destruction of the Jews in following them.

(20.) But the next Prophecy of our blessed Lord which I produce is more remarkable than these; and of which you see the fulfilling in a great measure, viz. That his Gospel should prevail over all the world, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it: and this told when he was low and despised, and had but twelve poor fishermen for his followers: and  
that

that his religion should conquer, not by the sword, like Mahomet's, but by patient suffering, as lambs among wolves. And in this state the church endured most terrible persecutions, when all the rage of hell was let loose against her, for the first three hundred years, without any help but from heaven only ; till at last, by the Divine Providence, the great Emperor of Rome, and other mighty Kings and Princes, without any force or compulsion, did voluntarily and freely submit their scepters to Christ.

No religion that ever was in the world was so begun, so propagated, and did so prevail : and hence we assuredly trust, that what remains will be fulfilled, of the promise of Christ to his church in the latter days.

But I speak now only of this Prophecy so long beforehand, and when there was so little appearance of its coming to pass so far as we have seen already.

Let me here remember one particular passage foretold by Christ concerning the woman, who anointed his body to the burying, that “ wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached  
“ throughout the whole world, this also that she  
“ hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial  
“ of her.” Mark xiv. 8, 9. And we see how it is spoken of to this day.

DE. If this book had been lost, we had not heard of this Prophecy.

CHR. So you may say of all the Bible, or of any other book: but Providence has fulfilled this Prophecy by preserving the book: and it is a prophecy that this book, at least this fact of the woman, should be preserved for ever, and it may be preserved though that book were lost.

(21.) DE. When prophecies are fulfilled, and the events come to pass, they are plain to every body; but why might they not have been as plain from the beginning? And then there could have been no dispute about them, as if it had been said, that such a one by name, at such a time, and in such a place, should do such things, &c.

CHR. Because God having given man free will, he does not force men to do any wicked thing: and it would be in the power of wicked men to defeat a Prophecy against themselves, as to the circumstance of time, place, or the manner of doing the thing.

For example, if the Jews had known that Christ had told his Apostles he was to be crucified, they would not have done it; they would have stoned him as they did St. Stephen; for that was the death appointed by the law for blasphemy: and they several times attempted to have stoned Christ for this, because he said I am  
the



the Son of God. John viii. 59. x. 31, 32, 33. But crucifixion was a death by the Roman law. Therefore the Jews, to fulfil this Prophecy (but not knowing it) delivered Christ to the Romans to be put to death. Yet he told them so much of it, that after he was crucified they might know it, as he said to them, John viii. 28.—  
“ When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then  
“ shall ye know that I am he.” And chap. x. 32, 33. “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,  
“ will draw all men unto me. This he said,  
“ signifying what death he should die.” But they understood it not till they had done it; then they knew what the lifting up meant: And chap. xviii. 31, 32. when Pilate would have had them judge him according to their law, which was stoning, they were cautious at this time only, and said, “ It is not lawful for us to put any man to death ;” because they were then under the government of the Romans. But the next words shew the design of Providence in it, “ that  
“ the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which  
“ he spake, signifying what death he should  
“ die.” They had no such caution upon them when they stoned St. Stephen after this, nor the many times before when they took up stones to stone the same Jesus.

Then again, the piercing his side with the spear was no part of the Roman sentence of execution,

ecution, but happened seemingly by mere accident: for the sentence of the law was to hang upon the cross till they were dead; but that being the day of preparation for the Sabbath, which began that evening soon after Christ and the thieves were fastened to the cross, before it could be supposed they were dead, therefore, “that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day,” the Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken (which was no part of the sentence neither, but done) lest they should escape when taken down. Accordingly the legs of the thieves were broken, for they were yet alive, and the reason why they brake not the legs of Christ was, because “they saw that he was dead already;” but to make sure, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear: little knowing that they were then fulfilling Prophecies, as that a “bone of him should not be broken.” And again, “They shall look on him whom they pierced.” As little did the soldiers think of it when they were casting lots upon his vesture: and the chief Priests (if they had known it or reflected upon it) would not have upbraided him in the very words that were foretold in Psalm xxii. which I have before quoted. And they would have contrived the money they gave to Judas to have been one piece more or less than just thirty: they

they would not have come so punctually in the way of that Prophecy, Zech. xi. 12, 13.—  
“ They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.” And they would have bought any other field with it, but especially not that of the Potter, which Zechariah there likewise mentions.

And as the enemies of Christ did not know they were fulfilling these Prophecies of him, so neither did his disciples at the time when they were so doing. And it is said, John xii. 16. “ These  
“ things understood not his disciples at the first;  
“ but when Jesus was glorified, then remem-  
“ bered they that these things were written of  
“ him, and that they had done these things unto  
“ him.” This makes the fulfilling these Prophecies yet more remarkable.

Where Providence sees that Prophecies will not be minded, they are more express and plain: as likewise where the passions and interests of men will hurry them on towards fulfilling them. Thus Alexander the Great is described as plainly almost as if he had been named, Dan. viii. 20, 21, 22. And it is said, that this Prophecy, which was shewed him by the High Priest at Jerusalem, did encourage him in his expedition against the Persians. But it is not so when a man is to do foolish and wicked things, and things hurtful to himself; for if these were told plainly and literally, it would be in his power to  
do

do otherwise; unless God should force his will, and then he would not be a free agent.

(22.) DE. I must have recourse to the Jews in answer to these Prophecies of the Messiah which you have brought; for they owning these Scriptures as Revelations given them by God, must have some solution or other for them, or else give themselves up as self-condemned.

CHR. The answers the Jews give will convince you the more, and render them indeed self-condemned.

Before the coming of Christ the Jews understood these texts as we do, to be certainly meant of the Messiah, and of none other.

But since that time they have forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory meanings upon them; for they agree not in their expositions, and the one does manifestly destroy the other.

Thus that text I before quoted, Gen. xlix. 10. was understood by the Chaldee and ancient Jewish interpreters to be meant of the Messiah.

Yet of their modern Rabbies some say, that it was meant of Moses; but others reject that, first, because it is plain that the gathering of the nations or Gentiles was not to Moses. Secondly, because the scepter was not given to  
Judah

Judah till long after Moses. The first of it that appears was Judg. xx. 18. when Judah was commanded by God to "go up first," and lead the rest of the tribes; and David was the first king of the tribe of Judah. Thirdly, because Moses did prophesy of a greater than himself to come, to whom the people should hearken. Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.

For these reasons other Rabbies say it could not be meant of Moses, but they apply it to the tabernacle of Shiloh. This was only for the sake of the word Shiloh, for otherwise it bears no resemblance either to the gathering of the Gentiles, or the sceptre of Judah: and though the house of God was first set up at Shiloh, yet it was removed from thence, and established at Jerusalem; which was the place of which Moses spoke that God would place his name there, as I shall shew you presently.

This interpretation therefore being rejected, other Rabbies say, that this Prophecy must be meant of the Messiah, but that by the word sceptre is not to be understood a sceptre of rule or government, but of correction and punishment, and that this should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came. But the text explaining sceptre by the word law-giver, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet until Shiloh came, over-

throws this interpretation, and shews the sceptre here mentioned to be meant of a sceptre of rule and government. Again, Joshua gave them rest from their enemies round about; and the land had rest many years under their judges; and David delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; and under Solomon they were the richest and happiest people upon earth; and frequently after they were in good condition and at ease: so that the sceptre of correction did often depart from them before Shiloh came.

This is so evident, that others of them allow this sceptre to be a sceptre of government; but they say the meaning is, that the sceptre shall not finally or for ever depart from Judah, because the Messiah will come and restore it to Judah again. But this is adding to the text, and making a new text of it, and quite different from the former, nay directly opposite to it; for the text speaks only of the departing of the sceptre, but nothing of the restoring it; and it cannot be restored till once it is departed: therefore this exposition saying it “shall depart,” and the text saying “shall not depart,” are directly contrary.

Lastly, there are others who throw aside all these excuses, and say, that the sceptre or dominion is not yet departed from Judah, for that some Jew or other may have some sort of rule



or government, in some part or other of the world, though we know it not.

DE. As if the Jews (who hold the best correspondence with one another of any people) could not tell this place, if there were any such where they were governed by their own laws, and by governments of their own nation, though in subjection to the government of the country where they lived.

These salvos of the Jews are contradictory to each other, they are poor excuses, and shew their cause to be perfectly destitute.

But I have an objection against this Prophecy, which affects both Jews and Christians: that the regal sceptre did depart from the tribe of Judah long before your Shiloh came.

CHR. First, this Prophecy does not call the sceptre a regal sceptre, and therefore denotes only government in the general.

Secondly, The whole land and the nation took their name from Judah. It was called the land of Judah, and the nation took the name of Jews from Judah, as before that of Hebrews from Heber their progenitor, Gen. x. 25. And this Prophecy spoke of those times when Judah should be the father of his country, and the whole nation should be comprehended under the name of Judah: and therefore Judah holds the sceptre wherever a Jew governs.—

Besides the words sceptre and throne are used in relation to inferior governors, to tributary kings, and kings in captivity; thus it is said, that thirty-seven years after the captivity of Judah, the king of Babylon set the throne of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, above the thrones of kings that were with him in Babylon. 2 Kings xxv. 27, 28. This was more than half the time of the captivity; and this was continued to Jehoiachin all the "days of his life," (ver. 29, 30.) which might last till the end, or near the end, of the captivity. But besides the king, the Jews had governors of their own nation allowed them, who were their archonites or rulers; and they enjoyed their own laws, though in subjection to the King of Babylon. The elders of Judah (which was a name of government) are mentioned in the captivity. Ezek. viii. 1. And the chief of the Fathers of Judah, and the Priests and the Levites. Ezra i. 5. And after the captivity, they had a trishahta or governor of their own nation. Ezra ii. 63. Neh. viii. 9.—And the throne or the governor is named. Neh. iii. 7. So that here was still the throne or sceptre of Judah.

And from the time of the Maccabees to their conquest by the Romans, the supreme authority was in their High Priests: as it was afterwards, But in subjection to the Romans; and they enjoyed

joyed their own laws.—“ Pilate said unto them,  
“ take ye him, and judge him according to your  
“ law.” John xviii. 31. And though they answered,  
“ It is not lawful for us to put any man  
“ to death; the reason is given in the next  
verse, “ That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled  
“ which he spake, signifying what death  
“ he should die.” For crucifixion was a Roman  
death;” but stoning, by the law of Moses,  
was the death for blasphemy, of which they accused  
him. And they afterwards stoned St. Stephen for  
the same (alledged) crime, according to their own  
law. Their High Priests and Council had full liberty  
to meet when they pleased, and to act according to  
their law. And Christ himself owns they “ sat in  
Moses’s seat.” Matth. xxiii. 2. The High Priest sat  
to judge St. Paul, who applied to him that text,  
Exod. xxii. 28. “ Thou shalt not revile the gods,  
nor  
“ curse the ruler of thy people, or speak evil  
“ of him,” as the Apostle renders it, Acts.  
xxiii. 5. So that here the government was still  
in the Jews, though in subjection to the Romans;  
and thus it continued till the destruction of  
Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans. But  
since that time they are dispersed in all countries,  
and have no governor or ruler of their own in  
any. The sceptre is entirely departed from them.

DE. It is impossible but the Jews must see the difference of their state before the destruction of Jerusalem, and since, and of their condition, as to government in their several captivities, and now in their dispersion. In the former, they had still a face of government left among themselves: but now, none at all. And their excuses which you have mentioned, render them indeed self-condemned.

What do they say to that text you have quoted, Jer. xxiii. 17, &c. that David should never want a son to sit upon his throne, &c. You Christians apply it to Christ, who was called the Son of David; but to whom do the Jews apply it?

CHR. Some of them say, that David will be raised from the dead, and made immortal, to fulfil this prophecy. Others say, that after the Messiah, who is to be of the seed of David, he shall thenceforward no more want a son, &c.

DE. Both these interpretations are in flat contradiction to the text. The text says, shall never want; these say, shall want for a long time; they must confess now for near seventeen hundred years together, and how much longer they cannot tell. They have had none to sit in Moses's seat, or on the throne of David, though in subjection to their enemies, as they had in the worst of their captivities; but have not now in their dispersion.

But

But is there any difference betwixt what you call the cathedra, or seat of Moses, and the throne of David?

CHR. None as to government; for Moses was king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxiii. 5. but David was the first king of the tribe of Judah, which was to be the name of the whole nation; and Christ was called the King of the Jews. It was the title set upon his cross. But after him none ever had that title to this day.

DE. This is not to be answered by the Jews. But pray what person is it do they say was meant in the liiid. of Isaiah, which you have quoted?

CHR. They will not have it to be any person at all; for they can find none, except our Christ, to whom these prophecies can any way be applied. Therefore they say it must be meant of the nation of the Jews, whose sufferings, &c. are there described in the name of a person, by which the people are to be understood.

DE. But the people and the person there described as suffering, &c. are plainly contradistinguished. It is said, ver. 8. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken."—And ver. 3, 4, &c. "We," (the people) "like sheep have gone astray—And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," that is, of

the people: who are here called wicked. But he is called "My righteous servant, who did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Therefore this people and the person here spoke of could not be the same. They are opposed to each other. The one called righteous, the other wicked. The one to die for the other, and to justify the other. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," &c.

CHR. The Jews before Christ came understood this prophecy of the Messiah, as indeed it can be applied to none other: but the Jews since Christ, to avoid the force of this and other prophecies which speak of the sufferings and death of the Messiah, have invented two Messiahs, one Ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, who is to be the suffering Messiah, the other Ben-David, of the tribe of Judah, who is to triumph gloriously, and shall raise from the dead all the Israelites, and among them the first Messiah, Ben-Joseph.

DE. Does the Scripture speak of two Messiahs, and the one raising the other?

CHR. No; not a word: but only of the Messiah, which shews it spoke only of one.—It mentions the twofold state of this Messiah, the first suffering, the second triumphing. Whence the modern Jews have framed to themselves these two Messiahs.



DE. This is shameful! And plainly to avoid the prophecies against them.

CHR. This of Isaiah is fully explained, Dan. ix. 24, &c. where it is said, that the Messiah the Prince should be cut off, but not for himself, but for the transgressions of the people, “To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.” And that this was to be within four hundred and ninety years after the building of the second temple, which I have mentioned before.

DE. I cannot imagine how the Jews get clear of this.

CHR. They cannot. But in spite to it, they seek now to undervalue the whole book of Daniel, though they dare not totally reject it, because it was received by their forefathers, who preceded Christ. But about a hundred years after Christ they made a new distribution of the books of the Old Testament, different from their fathers, and took the book of Daniel out of the middle of the Prophets, where it was placed before, and put it last of all. But more than this, to lessen the credit of this book, they adventured to shake the authority of their whole Scriptures; for they took upon them to make a distinction of the books of the Scripture, and made them not all inspired or canonical, but some of them they called *Ἁγία γράφα*, that is, holy.

or pious books, though in a lower class than those called inspired or canonical Scriptures.— And they put the book of Daniel into the inferior class; but in that book Daniel speaks of himself as having received these prophecies immediately from an angel of God. Wherein if he told us the truth, it must be put in the highest class of canonical Scripture; but if he told us false, then this book is quite through all a lie, and blasphemous too, in fathering it all upon God! So that the distinction of our modern Jews confounds themselves. And since they allow this book of Daniel a place among the Ἁγίόγραφα, or holy writings, they cannot deny it to be truly canonical, as all their fathers owned it before the coming of Christ. And if they throw off Daniel, they must discard Ezekiel too: for he gives the highest attestation to Daniel that can be given to mortal man; he makes him one of the three most righteous men to be found in all ages, and the very standard of wisdom to the world. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. xxviii. 3.

DE. What do they say to Hag. ii. 7, 9. where it is said, that Christ was to come into the second Temple?

CHR. Some of them say, that this must be meant of a temple yet to be built.

DE. This is denying the prophecy; for it is said, ver. 7. “I will fill this house with glory,  
“ &c.”

“ &c.” And ver. 9. “ The glory of this latter house—And in this place will I give peace, &c.” but I am not to defend the cause of the Jews. It seems to me very desperate. I own you Christians have the advantage of them in this.

CHR. And I hope it will have so much effect with you, as to make you consider seriously of the weight of this argument of prophecy we have discoursed.

DE. Let us at present leave this head of prophecy. Have you any further evidence to produce for your Christ?

(VII.) CHR. I have one more, which is yet more peculiar to him than even that of prophecy. For whatever weak pretence may be made of some prophecies among the Heathen, as to some particular events, of little consequence to the world, yet they never offered at that sort of evidence I am next to produce; which is not only prophecies of the fact, and that from the beginning of the world, but also types, resemblances, and exhibitions of the fact, in outward sensible institutions, ordained as law from the beginning, and to continue till the fact they prefigured should come to pass.

(I.) Such were the sacrifices instituted by God immediately upon the fall, (and upon his

promise of the life-giving seed, (Gen. iii. 15.) as types of that great and only propitiatory sacrifice for sin which was to come. Whose blood they saw continually shed (in type) in their daily sacrifices.

These were continued in the Heathen posterities of Adam by immemorial tradition from the beginning, though they had forgot the beginning of them, as they had of the world, or of mankind; yet they retained so much of the reason of them, as that they had universally the notion of a vicarious atonement, and that our sins were to be purged by the blood of others suffering in our stead. As likewise, that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, but that a more noble blood was necessary. Hence they came to human sacrifices, and at last to sacrifice the greatest, most noble, and most virtuous; and such offered themselves to be sacrificed for the safety of the people. As Codrus, King of the Athenians, who sacrificed himself on this account. The like did Curtius for the Romans, as supposing himself the bravest and most valuable of them all. So the Decii, the Fabii, &c. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia for the Greek army; and the King of Moab sacrificed his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, 2 Kings iii. 27. Thus the sacrificing (not their servants or slaves, but) their

their children to Moloch, is frequently mentioned of the Jews, which they did in imitation of the Heathen, as it is said, Pſal. cvi. 35, 36, 37, 38.

“ They were mingled among the Heathen, and  
“ learned their works; and they ſerved their  
“ idols—Yea they ſacrificed their ſons and their  
“ daughters unto the idols of Canaan, &c.”—

Purſuant to which notion, the prophet introduceth them arguing thus: “ Wherewith ſhall

“ I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf be-

“ fore the high God; Shall I come before him

“ with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year

“ old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands

“ of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of

“ oil? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſ-

“ greſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of

“ my ſoul?” Micah vi. 6, 7. They were

plainly ſearching after a complete and adequate

ſatisfaction for ſin; and they thought it neceſ-

fary.

DE. No doubt they thought ſo; but that did not make it neceſſary.

CHR. The doctrine of ſatisfaction is a ſubject by itſelf; which I have treated elſewhere, in my answer to the examination of my laſt dialogue againſt the Socinians. But I am not come ſo far with you yet; I am now only ſpeaking of ſacrifices as types of the ſacrifice of Chriſt.

(2.) And besides sacrifice in general, there were afterwards some particular sacrifices appointed more nearly expressive of our redemption by Christ. As the passover, which was instituted in memory of the redemption of the children of Israel (that is, the church) out of Egypt, (the house of bondage of this world, where we are in servitude to sin and misery) in the night when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians: but the destroyer was to pass over those houses where he saw the blood of the Paschal Lamb upon the door-posts. And it was to be eaten with unleavened bread, expressing a sincerity of the heart, without any mixture or taint of wickedness. And thus it is applied, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. “ Purge out therefore  
 “ the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,  
 “ as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our  
 “ passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us  
 “ keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither  
 “ with the leaven of malice and wickedness,  
 “ but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and  
 “ truth.”

(3.) There was a double exhibition of Christ on the great day of expiation, which was but once a year; on which day only the High Priest entered into the holy of holies (which represented heaven, Exod. xxv. 40. Wisd. ix. 8.  
 Heb.



Heb. ix. 24.) with the blood of the sacrifice, whose body was burnt without the camp; to shew God's detestation of sin: and that it was to be removed far from us: and that we must go out of the camp, that is, out of this world, bearing our reproach for sin, before we can be quite freed from it. See how exactly this was fulfilled in Christ, Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14.—

“ For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is  
“ brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest  
“ for sin, are burnt without the camp. Where-  
“ fore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the  
“ people with his own blood, suffered with-  
“ out the gate. Let us forth therefore unto  
“ him without the camp, bearing his reproach;  
“ for here we have no continuing city, but we  
“ seek one to come.”

The other lively representation of Christ's bearing our sins, and taking them away from us, which was made on the same day of expiation, was the scape goat, Lev. xvi. 21, 22. “ And  
“ Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head  
“ of the live goat, and confess over him all the  
“ iniquities of the children of Israel, and all  
“ their transgressions in all their sins, putting  
“ them upon the head of the goat, and shall  
“ send them away by the hand of a fit man into  
“ the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon  
“ him all their iniquities, into a land not inha-  
“ bited :

“bited: and he shall let go the goat in the  
“wilderness.” This is so plain, that it needs  
no application.

(4.) Another express representation of Christ was the brazen serpent in the wilderness, by looking upon which the people were cured of the stings of the fiery serpents. So in looking upon Christ by faith, the sting of the old serpent, the devil, is taken away. And the lifting up the serpent did represent Christ being lifted up upon the cross. Christ himself makes the allusion, John iii. 14. “As Moses lifted up the  
“serpent in the wilderness, even so must the  
“son of man be lifted up; that whosoever be-  
“lieveth in him should not perish, but have  
“eternal life.”

(5. ) He was likewise represented by the manna; for he was the true bread that came down from heaven to nourish us unto eternal life. John 31 to 36.

(6.) As also by the rock whence the waters flowed out to give them drink in the wilderness.  
“And that rock was Christ.” 1 Cor. x. 4.

(7.) And he was not only their meat and drink, but he was also their constant guide, and  
led

led them in a pillar of fire by night, and of a cloud by day. And the cloud of glory in the temple, in which God appeared, was by the Jews understood as a type of the Messiah, who is the true Shechina, or habitation of God.

(8.) The sabbath is called a shadow of Christ, Col. ii. 17. It is a figure of that eternal rest procured to us by Christ; therefore it is called a sign of the perpetual covenant, Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. Eezk. xx. 12.

(9.) And such a sign was the Temple at Jerusalem, at which place, and none other, the sacrifices of the Jews were to be offered, Deut. xii. 11, 13, 14. Because Christ was to be sacrificed there, and as a token of it, those sacrifices which were types of him were to be offered only there.

And so great stress was laid upon this, that no sin of the Jews is oftener remembered than their breach of this command. It was a blot set upon their several reformatiions, otherwise good and commendable in the sight of God, that the high places (where they used to sacrifice) were not taken away. This is marked as the great defect in the reformation of Aza, 1 Kings xv. 14. of Jehoshaphat, 1 King xxii. 43. of Jehoash, 2 Kings xii. 3. of Amaziah, 2 Kings

xv. 4. of Jotham, ver. 35. But they were taken away by Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 4. and the people instructed to sacrifice and burn incense at Jerusalem only. 2 Chron. xxxii. 12. Isai. xxxvi. 7.

There was likewise a further design of Providence in limiting their sacrifices to Jerusalem, which was, that after the great propitiatory sacrifices of Christ had been once offered there, God was to remove the Jews from Jerusalem, that they might have no sacrifice at all (as, for that reason, they have not had any part of the world near these seventeen hundred years past) to instruct them. That (as the Apostle speaks to them, Heb. x. 26.) “there remaineth no “more” (or other) “sacrifice for sins.” And since by the law their sins were to be purged by sacrifice, they have now no way to purge their sins; to force them (as it were) to look back upon that only sacrifice which can purge their sins. And till they return to that, they must have no sacrifice at all, but die in their sins. As Jesus said unto them, “I go my way, and ye “shall die in your sins.—For if ye believe not “that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,” John viii. 21. 24.

And Daniel prophesied expressly, that soon after the death of the Messiah, the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary should be destroyed,  
and

and that the sacrifice should cease, “ Even until  
“ the consummation, and that determined, shall  
“ be poured upon the desolate.” Dan. ix. 26,  
27.

And this desolation of theirs, and what was determined upon them, was told them likewise by Hosea, chap. iii. 4. “ For the children of  
“ Israel shall abide many days without a sacri  
“ fice.” But he says in the next verse, that  
“ in the latter days they shall return, and seek  
“ the Lord their God, and David their king;”  
that is, the Son of David, their Prince and Mes-  
siah. As he is called Messiah the Prince, Dan.  
ix. 25.

Thus as salvation was of the Jews, because  
Christ was to come of them, so this salvation  
was only to be had at Jerusalem, where he was  
to suffer, and by which only salvation was to be  
had.

(10.) DE. This argument is to the Jews; and  
if I were a Jew it would move me, because they  
never were so long before without king, temple,  
or sacrifice.

CHR. But the prophecies of it, and these ful-  
filled as you have seen; and Christ being so  
plainly pointed at, and the place of his passion,  
by limiting the sacrifices to Jerusalem only; and  
by causing the legal sacrifices to cease through-  
out

out the world, to shew that they were fulfilled: all this is a strong evidence to you of the truth of these things, and of our Jesus being the Messiah, or Christ, who was prophesied of.

DE. I cannot deny but there is something remarkable in this, which I will take time to consider; but I do not see how the Jews can stand out against this, because this mark given by Daniel of the Messiah, that soon after his death the sacrifice should cease, cannot agree to any after-Messiah who should now come so many ages after the sacrifice has ceased.

CHR. Since we have fallen into the subject of the Jews, I will give you another prophecy which cannot be fulfilled in any after-Messiah whom the Jews expect. And it will be also a confirmation to you to the truth of the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures.

Thus God speaks, Jer. xxiii. 20, 21, 22.—  
 “ thus saith the Lord, if you can break my  
 “ covenant of the day, and my covenant of  
 “ the night, and that there should not be day  
 “ and night in their season: then may also my  
 “ covenant be broken with David my ser-  
 “ vant, that he should not have a son to reign  
 “ upon his throne; and with the Levites, the  
 “ Priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven  
 “ cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the  
 “ sea



“ sea measured : so will I multiply the seed of  
“ David my servant, and the Levites that minis-  
“ ter unto me.”

Now let the Jews tell in which Son of David this is fulfilled, except only in our Christ.

And how this is made good to the Priests and Levites, otherwise than as Isaiah prophesied, chap. lxvi. 21. “ And I will also take of them” (the Gentiles) “ for Priests and for Levites, “ saith the Lord.” And as it is thus applied, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, and Rev. i. 6. And this evangelical priesthood is multiplied as the stars of heaven, (which they were frequently called) not like the tribe of Levi, which could not afford Priests to all the earth.

And as I said before of Jerusalem and the sacrifices there, that they are ceased, to shew they are fulfilled, so here, after the Son of David was come, all his other sons ceased, and the very genealogy of their tribes, and so of Judah, is lost, as also of the tribe of Levi, so that the Jews can never tell, if any after-Messiah should appear, whether he were of the tribe of Judah, far less whether he were of the lineage of David; nor can they shew the genealogy of any they call Levites now among them.

This is occasioned by their being dispersed among all nations, and yet preserved a distinct people from all the earth, though without any country

country of their own, or King, or Priest, or temple, or sacrifice. And they are thus preserved by the providence of God, (so as never any nation was since the foundation of the world) to shew the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning them, and the judgments pronounced against them for their crucifying their Messiah; and that their conversion may be more apparent to the world, and their being gathered out of all nations, and restored to Jerusalem (as is promised them) when they shall come to acknowledge their Messiah.

And God not permitting them to have any king or governor upon earth, ever since their last dispersion by the Romans, (lest they might say, that the sceptre was not departed from Judah) is to convince them (when God shall take the veil of their heart) that no other Messiah who can come hereafter can answer this prophecy of Jeremiah, or that of Jacob, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came.

(11.) And it is wonderful to consider, how expressly their present state is prophesied of, that it could not be more literal, if it were to be worded now by us who see it. As that they should be scattered into all countries, sifted as with a sieve among all nations, yet preserved a  
people;

people; and that God would make an utter end of those nations who had oppressed them, and blot out their names from under heaven. (As we have seen it fulfilled upon the great empires of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans, who one after the other had miserably wasted the Jews) but that the name of the Jews (the fewest and poorest of all nations) should remain for ever, and they a people distinct from all the nations in the world, though scattered among them all. Read the prophecies express upon this point. Jer. xxx. 11. xxxi. 36, 37. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26. xlvi. 28. Isai. xxvii. 7. xxix. 7, 8. liv. 9, 10. lxv. 8. Ezek. vi. 8. xi. 16, 17. xii. 15, 16. Amos ix. 8, 9. Zech. x. 9. And it was foretold them long before, that thus it would be, Lev. xxvi. 44, and this “in the latter days.” Deut. iv. 27, 30, 31. Thus Moses told them of it so long before, as the after-prophets frequently; and you see all these prophecies literally fulfilled and fulfilling. The like cannot be said of any other nation that ever was upon the earth! So destroyed, and so preserved! And for so long a time! Having worn out all the great empires of the world, and still surviving them! To fulfil what was further prophesied of them to the end of the world.

DE. I cannot say but there is something very surprising in this: I never thought of it before.

It

It is a living prophecy, which we see fulfilled and still fulfilling at this day before our eyes. For we are sure these prophecies were not coined yesterday; and they are as express and particular as if they were to be wrote now, after the events are so far come to pass.

(12.) CHR. As the door was kept open to Christ before he came, by the many and flagrant prophecies of him, and by the types representing him, so was the door for ever shut after him, by those prophecies being all fulfilled and completed in him, and applicable to none who should come after him; and by all the types ceasing, the shadows vanishing when the substance was come. No Messiah can come now, before the sceptre depart from Judah, and the sacrifice from Jerusalem. Before the sons of David (all except Christ) shall cease to sit upon his throne, none can come now, within four hundred and ninety years of the building of the second Temple; nor come into that very Temple, as I have before shewed was expressly prophesied by Daniel and Haggai.

DE. I know not what the Jews can say, who own these prophecies.

CHR. They say, that the coming of the Messiah at the time spoke of in the Prophets, has been delayed because of their sins.

DE.

DE. Then it may be delayed for ever, unless they can tell us when they will grow better. But, however, these prophecies have failed which spoke of the time of the Messiah's coming; and they can never be a proof hereafter, because the time is past. So that, according to this, they were made for no purpose, unless to shew that they were false; that is, no prophecies at all!

But were these prophecies upon condition? Or was it said that the coming of the Messiah should be delayed if the Jews were sinful?

CHR. No: so far from it, that it was expressly prophesied that the coming of the Messiah should be in the most sinful state of the Jews, and to purge their sins. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. xiii. 1. And the ancient tradition of the Jews was pursuant to this, that at the coming of the Messiah the temple should be a den of thieves. Rabbi Juda in Masoreta. And a time of great corruption. Talmud. tit. de Syne-drio, and de Ponderibus, &c.

But more than this, the very case is put of their being most sinful, and it is expressly said, that this should not hinder the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, spoke of as the son of David, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, 16. Psal. lxxxix. 30, 33—37.

But it was prophesied that they should not

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know their Messiah, and should reject him when he came; that he should be a “stone of stumbling,” and a “rock of offence” to them. *Isai. viii. 14, 15.* And that “their eyes should be closed,” that they should not understand their own Prophets, *chap. xxix. 9, 10, 11.*—That their builders should reject the head-stone of their corner, *Psal. cxviii. 22.* And the like in several other places of their own prophets. And thus they mistook the prophecy concerning the coming of Elias, whom it is said they knew not, “but did to him what they listed,” and so the same of Christ, *Matt. xvii. 12.* And it is said, *1 Cor. ii. 8,* that “had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

DE. This indeed solves the prophecies, both those of the coming of the Messiah, and of the Jews not knowing him, and therefore rejecting him; and likewise obviates this excuse of theirs; for if they were very sinful at that time, it was a greater punishment of their sin not to know, and to reject their Messiah, than his not coming at that time would have been.

CHR. The great sin mentioned for which they were punished by several captivities, was their idolatry, the last and longest of which captivities was that of seventy years in Babylon; since which time they have forsaken their idolatry,



latry, and have never been nationally guilty of it since, but always had it in the utmost abhorrence. But since their rejecting their Messiah, they have now been near seventeen hundred years not in a captivity, where they might be all together, and enjoying their own law, government, and worship, in some manner, but dispersed over all the world, without country of their own, or King, or Priest, or Temple, or Sacrifice, or any Prophet to comfort them, or give them hopes of a restoration: and all this come upon them, not for their old sin of idolatry, but from that curse they imprecated upon themselves, when they crucified their Messiah, saying, ‘His blood be on us, and on our children.’ Which cleaves unto them from that day to this, and is visible to all the world but to themselves! And what other sin can they think greater than idolatry, for which they have been punished so much more terribly than for all their idolatries; what other sin can this be, but their crucifying the Messiah! And here they may see their sinful state, which they allege as an excuse for their Messiah’s not coming at the time foretold by the Prophets, rendered ten-fold more sinful, by their rejecting him when he came.

DE. This is a full answer, and convincing as

to the Jews. But have you any more to say to me?

(13.) CHR. I have one thing more to offer, which may come under this head of types, and that is, persons who represented Christ in several particulars, and so might be called personal types.

And I will not apply these out of my own head, but as they are applied in the New Testament, which having all the marks of the Old Testament, and stronger evidence than these, in those marks we are now upon, their authority is indisputable.

(1.) I begin with Adam, who gave us life and death too; and Christ came by his death to restore us to life again, even life eternal. Hence Christ is called the second Adam, and Adam is called the figure of Christ. The parallel betwixt them is insisted on, Rom v. 12, to the end, and 1 Cor. xv. 45 to 50. Eve received her life from Adam, as the church from Christ. She was taken out of the side of Adam when he was in a dead sleep; and after Christ was dead, the sacraments of water and blood flowed out of his side, that is, baptism, whereby we are born into Christ, and the sacrament of his blood, whereby we are nourished into eternal life.

(2.) Enoch

(2.) Enoch was carried up bodily into heaven: as Elijah. One under the patriarchal, the other under the legal dispensation. In both, the ascension of Christ was prefigured.

(3.) Noah, a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and father of the new. Who saved the church by water, the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

(4.) Melchisedec, that is, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, and Priest of the most High God; who was made like unto the Son of God, a priest continually. Heb. vii. 1, 2, 3.

(5.) Abraham, the friend of God, and Father of the faithful, the heir of the world, Rom. iv. 13. In whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, Gen. xviii. 18.

(6.) Isaac, the heir of this promise, was born after his father and mother were both past the age of generation in the course of nature, Gen. xvii. 17. xviii. 11. Rom. iv. 19. Heb. xi. 11, 12. The nearest type that could be to the generation of Christ wholly without a man.

And his sacrifice had a very near resemblance to the sacrifice and death of Christ, who lay three days in the grave, and Isaac was three days a dead man (as we say in the law) under the sentence of death, Gen. xxii. 4, whence Abraham

received him in a figure, Heb. xi. 19, that is, of the resurrection of Christ. And Abraham was commanded to go three days journey to sacrifice Isaac upon the same mountain, (according to the ancients) where Christ was crucified, and where Adam was buried. Again the common epithet of Christ, i. e. “the only-begotten of “the Father, and his beloved Son,” were both given to Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2. Heb. xi. 17. For he was the only son that was begotten in that miraculous manner, after both his parents were decayed by nature. And he was the only son of the promise, which was not made to the seed of Abraham in general, but “in Isaac shall thy “seed be called,” Gen. xxi. 12. “He saith not, “And to seeds, as of many, but as of one. And “to thy seed, which is Christ,” Gal. iii. 16.

And as Isaac, which signifies rejoicing, or laughing for joy, was thus the only begotten of his parents, so Abram signifies the glorious father, and Abraham (into which his name was changed on the promise of Isaac, Gen. xvii. 5, 16.) signifies the father of a multitude, to express the coming in of the Gentiles to Christ, and the increase of the Gospel; whence it is there said to Abraham, “A father of many nations have I made thee, and in thy seed all the “nations of the earth shall be blessed.”

Isaac, who was born by promise of a free woman,

man, represented the Christian church, in opposition to Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, of a bond-maid, and signified the Jewish church under the law. See this allegory carried on, Gal. iv. 21, to the end.

(7.) Jacob, in his Vision of the Ladder, (Gen. xxviii. 12.) shews the intercourse which was opened by Christ betwixt heaven and earth, by his making peace: and to this he alludes when he says, "Hereafter you shall see Heaven open, " and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," John i. 15.

And Jacob's wrestling with the angel, (Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. Hos. xii. 4.) and as it were prevailing over him by force to bless him, shews the strong and powerful intercession of Christ; whereby (as he words it, Matt. xi. 12.) "heaven " suffereth violence, and the violent take it by " force." Whence the name of Jacob was then turned to Israel, that is, one who prevails upon God, or has power over him; God representing himself here as overcome by us: and the name of Israel was ever after given to the church. But much more so when Christ came, as he said, Matt. xi. 12. "From the " days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," &c. that is, from the first promulgation of Christ being come. Thenceforward the Gentiles began to



press into the Gospel, and as by force to take it from the Jews. This was signified in the name Jacob, that is, a supplanter, for the Gentiles here supplanted their elder brother the Jews, and stole the blessing and heirship from them.

(8.) Joseph was sold by his brethren out of envy; but it proved the preservation of them and all their families: and Christ was sold by his brethren out of envy, Mark xv. 10, which proved the means of their redemption: and Christ, as Joseph, became Lord over his brethren.

(9.) Moses calls Christ a Prophet like unto himself, Deut. xviii. 18. He represented Christ the great Lawgiver; and his delivering Israel out of Egypt, was a type of Christ's delivering his church from the bondage of sin and hell.

(10.) Joshua, called also Jesus, Heb. iv. 8, overcame all the enemies of Israel, and gave them possession of the Holy Land, which was a type of heaven: and Christ appeared to Joshua, as Captain of the Host of the Lord, Jos. v. 14. So that Joshua was his Lieutenant representing him.

(11.) Sampson, who by his single valour and his own strength overcame the Philistines, and slew more at his death than in all his life, was a representation of Christ, who "trode the wine-  
"press



“ prefs alone, and of the people there was none  
“ with him, but his own arm brought him sal-  
“ vation,” Ifai. lxi. 3, 5. But his death com-  
pleted his victory, whereby he overcame all  
the power of the enemy, “ and having spoiled  
“ principalities and powers, he made a shew of  
“ them openly, triumphing over them in his  
“ cros,” Col. ii. 15.

(12.) David, whose Son Christ is called,  
speaks frequently of him in his own person, and  
in events which cannot be applied to David, as  
Psal. xvi. 10. “ Thou wilt not leave my soul in  
“ hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see corrup-  
“ tion ;” for David has seen corruption. Christ  
is said to sit upon the throne of David, Ifai. ix.  
7. And Christ is called by the name of David,  
Hos. iii. 5. and frequently in the Prophets.

David from a shepherd became a King and a  
Prophet, denoting the threefold office of Christ,  
pastoral, regal, and prophetic.

(13.) Solomon, the wisest of men, his peace-  
able and magnificent reign represented the tri-  
umphal state of Christ’s kingdom, which is de-  
scribed, Psal. lxxii. inscribed for Solomon, (there  
called the king’s son) but far exceeding the  
glory of his reign, or what can possibly be ap-  
plied to him, as ver. 5, 8, 11, 17. But his  
reign came the nearest of any to that universal  
and glorious reign there described, particularly

in his being chosen to build the temple, because he was a man of peace, and had shed no blood, like David his father, who conquered the enemies of Israel, but Solomon built the Church in full peace; and as it is particularly set down, 1 Kings vi. 7, and no doubt he was ordered by God so to do, “That the house when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building.” Which did denote that the Church of Christ was to be built, not only in peace, but without noise or confusion, as Isaiah prophesied of him, chap. xlii. 2. “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall he not break,” &c. He was not to conquer with the sword, as the Israelites subdued Canaan, but to overcome by meekness, and doing good to his enemies, and patiently suffering all injuries from them. And so he taught his followers, as St. Paul says, 2 Tim. ii. 24. “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men.—In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves,” &c.

And I cannot think but there was some imitation of this peaceable temple of Solomon, in the temple of Janus among the Romans; for that  
 was

was never to be shut but in time of peace; which happened rarely among them, but three times in all their history. The last was in the reign of Augustus, in which time Christ came into the world, when there was a profound and universal peace: and so it became the Prince of Peace, whose birth was thus proclaimed by the Angels, Luke ii. 14. "Glory to God on high, " and on earth peace, good-will towards men." But to go on.

(14.) Jonah's being three days and nights in the belly of the whale, was a sign of Christ's being so long in the heart of the earth. Christ himself makes the allusion, Matt. xii. 40.

(15.) But as there were several persons, at several times, representing and prefiguring several particulars of the life and death of Christ: so there was one standing and continual representation of him appointed in the person of the High Priest under the law; who, entering into the holy of holies once a year, with the blood of the great expiatory sacrifice, and he only, to make atonement for sin, did lively represent our great High Priest entering into Heaven, once for all, with all his own blood, to expiate the sins of the whole world. This is largely insisted upon in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. vii. viii. ix. x.

And our deliverance by the death of Christ is  
D 6 represented,

represented, as in a picture, in that ordinance of the law, that the man-slayer, who fled to one of the cities of refuge, (which were all of the cities of the Levites) should not come out thence till the death of the High Priest, and no satisfaction be taken till then, and then he should be acquitted and “return into the land of his possession,” Num. xxxv. 6, 25, 26, 27, 28.

And I doubt not but the Gentiles had from hence their asylums or temples of refuge for criminals.

(1.) DE. There is a resemblance in these things; but I would not have admitted them as a proof, if you had not supported them, at least most of them, with the authority of the New Testament. And it was not necessary that every one should be named in it; for those that are named are only occasionally; and I must take time to consider of the evidences you have brought for the authority of the New Testament, which you have made full as great, if not greater, than the evidences for the Old Testament.

CHR. I may say greater upon this head of Prophecies and Types, because these are no proofs till they are fulfilled; though then they prove the truth of these Prophecies and Types; and so the one confirms the other: but the whole evidence of the law is not made apparent

rent till we see it fulfilled in the Gospel. For which reason I call the Gospel the strongest proof, not only as to itself, but likewise as to the law; and the Jews, as much as in them lies, have invalidated this strongest proof for the Old Testament, which is the fulfilling of it in the New. Nay, they have rendered these Prophecies false, which, they say, were not fulfilled at the time they spake of, and never now can be fulfilled. And as no fact but that of our Christ alone ever had his evidence of Prophecies and Types from the beginning, so never can any other fact have it now while the world lasts.

(2.) DE. Why do you say, never can have it? For may not God make what fact he pleases, and give it what evidence he pleases?

CHR. But it cannot have the evidence that the fact of Christ has, unless at that distance of time hereafter, as from the beginning of the world to this day. Because God took care that the evidence of Christ should commence from the very beginning, in the promise of him made to Adam, and to be renewed by the Prophets in all the after-ages till he should come: and the evidence of him after his coming (in which I have instanced) and which continues to this day, before it can belong to any other, must have the same compass of time that has gone to confirm  
this



this evidence, else it has not the same evidence.

(3.) DE. By this argument the evidence grows stronger the longer it continues, since you say, that the prophecies of the Scriptures reach to the end of the world, and so will be further and further fulfilling every day.

This is contrary to what one of your doctors has lately advanced; who pretends to calculate the age of evidences\*, that in such a time they decay, and in such a time must die. And that the evidence of Christianity having lasted so long, is upon the decay, and must wear out soon, if not supplied by some fresh and new evidence.

CHR. This may be true as to fables, which have no foundation: but is that Prophecy I mentioned to you of the dispersion and yet wonderful preservation of the Jews, less evident to you, because it was made so long ago?

DE. No. It is much more evident for that. If I had lived at the time when those Prophecies were made, I fancy I should not have believed one word of them; but wondered at the assurance of those who ventured to foretel such improbable and almost impossible things.

\* Craig, *Theologiæ Christianæ Principia Mathematica* 1699.



And I should have thought the same of what you have told me of your Christ, foretelling the progress of his Gospel, at the first so very slender appearance of it, and by such weak and improbable means, as only suffering and dying for it, which to me would have seemed perfect despair, and a giving up the cause.

I should have thought of them (as of others) who prophesy of things after their time, that they might not be contradicted while they lived.

But my seeing so much of these Prophecies concerning the Jews, and the progress of the Gospel, come to pass so long time after, is the only thing that makes me lay stress upon them, and which makes them seem wonderful to me.

CHR. When the prophecies shall all be fully completed at the end of the world, they will then seem strongest of all; they will then be undeniable; when Christ shall visibly descend from heaven (in the same manner as he ascended) to execute both what he has promised and threatened. And in the mean time, the Prophecies lose none of their force, but their evidence encreases, as “the light shineth more and more” unto the perfect day.”

(VIII.) DE. I observe you have made no use of that common topic of the truth and sincerity  
of

of those penmen of the Scriptures, and what interest they could have in setting up these things if they had been false; for this can amount, at most, but to a probability: and you having produced those evidences which you think infallible, it might seem a lessening of your proof to insist upon bare probabilities; so that I suppose you give that up.

(1.) CHR. No, Sir, I give it not up, though I have not made it the chief foundation of my argument; and if it were but a probability, it wants not its force; for it is thought unreasonable to deny a flagrant probability, where there is not as strong a probability on the other side, for then that makes a doubt: but otherwise, men generally are satisfied with probabilities, for that is the greatest part of our knowledge. If we will believe nothing but what carries an infallible demonstration along with it, we must be sceptics in most things of the world; and such were never thought the wisest men.

But besides, a probability may be sooner discerned by some than the infallibility of a demonstration; therefore we must not lay aside probabilities.

But in this case, I think there is an infallible assurance, as infallible as the senses of all mankind; and I suppose you will not ask a greater.

(2.) DE.

(2.) DE. How can you say that? When the suffering of afflictions, and death itself, is but a probability of the truth of what is told us: because some have suffered death for errors.

CHR. But then they thought them true; and men may be deceived in their judgments: we see many examples of it. But if the facts related be such, as that it is impossible for those who tell them to be imposed upon themselves, or for those to whom they are told to believe them, if not true, without supposing an universal deception of the senses of mankind, then I hope I have brought the case up to that infallible demonstration I promised: and this is the case of the facts related in Holy Scripture. They were told by those who saw them, and did them, and they were told to those who saw them likewise themselves: and the relators appealed to this: so that here could be no deceit.

DE. I grant there is a great difference between errors in opinion, and in fact; and that such facts as are told of Moses and of Christ, could not have passed upon the people then alive, and who were said to have seen them. And I find that both Moses, Christ, and the Apostles, did appeal to what the people they spoke to had seen themselves.

CHR. With this consideration, their patient suffering, even unto death, for the truth of what  
they

they taught, will be a full demonstration of the truth of it.

(3.) Add to this, that their enemies who persecuted them, the Romans, as well as Jews, to whom they appealed as witnesses of the facts, did not offer to deny them.

That none of the apostates from Christianity did attempt to detect any falshood in the facts; though they might have had great rewards if they could have done it; the Roman emperors being then persecutors of Christianity, and for three hundred years after Christ. And Julian the emperor, afterwards turned apostate, who had been initiated in the sacra of Christianity, yet could not he detect any of the facts.

(4.) And it was a particular providence for the further evidence of Christianity, that all the civil governments in the world were against it for the first three hundred years, lest it might be said, (as it is ridiculously in your Amintor) that the awe of the civil government might hinder those who could make the detection.

Now, Sir, to apply all that we have said, I desire you would compare these evidences I have brought for Christianity, with those that are pleaded for any other religion.

There are but four in the world, viz. Christianity, Judaism, Heathenism, and Mahometanism.

(1.) Chris-

(1.) Christianity was the first; for from the first promise of Christ made to Adam during the patriarchal and legal dispensations, all was Christianity in type, as I have shewed.

And as to Moses and the law, the Jews can give no evidence for that, which will not equally establish the truth of Christ and the Gospel. Nor can they disprove the facts of Christ by any topic, which will not likewise disprove all those of Moses and the Prophets. So that they are hedged in on every side: they must either renounce Moses, or acknowledge Christ.

Moses and the law have the first five evidences, but they have not the sixth and the seventh, which are the strongest.

This is as to Judaism before Christ came; but since, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity, in favour of any future Messiah, it has none of the evidences at all. On the contrary, their own prophecies and types make against them; for their prophecies are fulfilled, and their types are ceased, and cannot belong to any other Messiah who should come hereafter. They stand now more naked than the Heathens or the Mahometans.

(2.) Next for Heathenism, some of the facts recorded of their gods have the first and second evidences, and some the third, but not one of them the fourth, or any of the other evidences.

But



But truly and properly speaking, and if we will take the opinion of the Heathens themselves, they were no facts at all, but mythological fables, invented to express some moral virtues or vices, or the history of nature, and power of the elements, &c. As likewise to turn great part of the history of the Old Testament into fable, and make it their own, for they disdained to borrow from the Jews. They made gods of men, and the most vicious too: insomuch that some of their wise men thought it a corruption of youth to read the history of their gods, whom they represented as notorious liars, thieves, adulterers, &c. though they had some mythology hid under all that.

And as men were their gods, so they made the first man to be father of the gods, and called him Saturn, not begot by any man, but the son of Cœlus and Vesta; that is, of heaven and earth. And his maiming his father with a steel scythe, was to shew how heaven itself is impaired by time, whom they painted with wings and a scythe mowing down all things. And Saturn eating up his own children, was only to express how time devours all its own productions: and his being deposed by Jupiter his son, shews, that time, which wears away all other things, is worn away itself at last.

Several of the heathen authors have given us  
the



the mythology of their gods, with which I will not detain you.

They expressed every thing, and worshipped every thing under the name of a god, as the god of sleep, of music, of eloquence, of hunting, drinking, love, war, &c. They had above thirty thousand of them; and in what they told of them, and as they described them, they often traced the sacred story.

Ovid begins his *Metamorphoses* with a perfect poetical version of the beginning of Genesis: *Ante Mare et Tellus*.—Then goes on with the history of the creation; the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, and being made after the image of God, and to have dominion over the inferior creatures. Then he tells of the general corruption, and the giants before the flood, when the earth was filled with violence; for which all mankind, with the beasts and the fowl, were destroyed by the universal deluge, except only Deucalion and Pyrrha his wife, who were saved in a boat, which landed them on the top of Mount Parnassus; and that from these two the whole earth was re-peopled. I think it will be needless to detain the reader with an application of this to the history of the creation set down by Moses, of the flood, and the ark wherein Noah was saved, and the earth re-peopled by him, &c.

And Noah was plainly intended likewise in their god Janus, with his two faces, one old, looking backward to the old world that was destroyed; the other young, looking forward to the new world that was to spring from him.

So that even their turning the sacred history into fable, is a confirmation of it. And there can be no comparison betwixt the truths of the facts so attested, as I have shewed, and the fables that were made from them.

(3.) Lastly, as to the Mahometan religion, it wants all the evidences we have mentioned, for there was no miracle said to be done by Mahomet, publicly and in the face of the world, but that only of conquering with the sword. Who saw his Mesra, or Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven in one night, and back in bed with his wife in the morning? Who was present and heard the conversation the moon had with him in his cave? It is not said there was any witness.—And the Alcoran, c. vi. excuses his not working any miracles to prove his mission. They say that Moses and Christ came to shew the clemency and goodness of God, to which miracles were necessary: but that Mahomet came to shew the power of God, to which no miracle was needful but that of the sword.

(1.) And his Alcoran is a rhapsody of stuff,  
without

-without head or tail, one would think wrote by a mad man, with ridiculous titles, as the chapter of the Cow, of the Spider, &c.

And their legends are much more senseless than those of the Papists; as of an angel, the distance betwixt whose two hands is seventy thousand days journey. Of a cow's head with horns which have forty thousand knots, and forty days journey betwixt each knot: and others which have seventy mouths, and every mouth seventy tongues, and each tongues praise God seventy times a day, in seventy different idioms. And the wax candles before the throne of God, which are fifty years journey from one end to the other. The Alcoran says, the earth was created in two days, and is supported by an ox, which stands under it, upon a white stone, with his head to the east, and his tail to the west, having forty horns, and as great a distance betwixt every horn as a man could walk in a thousand years time.

Then their description of heaven is a full enjoyment of wine, women, and other like gross sensual pleasures.

(2.) When you compare this with our Holy Scriptures, you will need no argument to make you see the difference. The Heathen orators have admired the sublime of the style of our Scriptures; no writing in the world comes near it,

it, even with all the disadvantage of our translation, which being obliged to be literal, must lose much of the beauty of it. The plainness and succinctness of the historical part, the melody of the Psalms, the instruction of the Proverbs, the majesty of the Prophets, and, above all, that easy sweetness in the New Testament, where the glory of heaven is set forth in a grave and moving expression, which yet reaches not the height of the subject; not like the flights of rhetoric, which set out small matters in great words. But the Holy Scriptures touch the heart, raise expectation, confirm our hope, strengthen our faith, give peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is inexpressible. And which you will experience when you once come to believe; you will then bring forth these fruits of the Spirit, when you receive the word with pure affection, as we pray in our Litany.

(3.) But, Sir, if there is truth in the Alcoran, then the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God; for the Alcoran says so, and that it was sent to confirm them, even the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament; and it expressly owns our Jesus to be the Messiah. At the end of the fourth chapter it has these words: "The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is a prophet, and an angel of God, his Word and his

his Spirit, which he sent to Mary." But it gives him not the name of Son of God, for this wise reason, chap. vi. "How shall God have a son, who hath no wives?" Yet it owns Jesus to be born of a pure virgin, without a man, by the operation of the Spirit of God. And in the same chapter this Mahomet acknowledges his own ignorance, and says, "I told you not that I had in my power all the treasures of God, neither that I had knowledge of the future and past, nor do affirm that I am an angel, I only act what hath been inspired into me; is the blind like him that seeth clearly?" And after says, "I am not your tutor, every thing hath its time, you shall hereafter understand the truth."

This is putting off, and bidding them expect some other after Mahomet. But our Jesus said, he was our tutor and teacher, and that there was none to come after him. Mahomet said he was no angel, but that Jesus was an angel of God. But when God bringeth Jesus into the world, he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. i. 6. And he made him Lord of all the angels. Mahomet knew not what was past or to come; but our Jesus knew all things, and what was in the heart of every man, John ii. 24, 25. which none can do, but God only, 1 Kings viii. 39. and foretold things to come to the end of the world. Mahomet had not all the trea-



asures of God: but in Jesus are hid “all the  
 “treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For in  
 “him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead  
 “bodily,” Col. ii. 3, 9.

Again, Mahomet never called himself the  
 Messiah, or the Word, or Spirit of God, yet all  
 these appellations he gives to our Jesus.

There were prophecies of Jesus which we  
 have seen: were there any of Mahomet?—  
 None; except of the “false Christs and false  
 “Prophets,” which Jesus told should come  
 after him, and bid us beware of them, for that  
 they should deceive many.

(4.) DE. But if Mahomet gave thus the pre-  
 ference to Christ in every thing, and said that  
 his Alcoran was only a confirmation of the Gos-  
 pel: how came he to set it up against the Gos-  
 pel, and to reckon the Christians among the un-  
 believers?

CHR. No otherwise than as other heretics  
 did, who called themselves the only true Chris-  
 tians, and invented new interpretations of the  
 Scriptures. The Socinians now charge whole  
 Christianity with apostacy, idolatry, and poly-  
 theism: and the Alcoran is but a system of the  
 old Arianism, ill digested, and worse put toge-  
 ther, with a mixture of some Heathenism and  
 Judaism; for Mahomet’s father was a Heathen,  
 his mother a Jewess, and his tutor was Sergius  
 the



the Monk, a Nestorian; which sect was a branch of Arianism: these crudely mixed made up the farrago of the Alcoran; but the prevailing part was Arianism; and where that spread itself in the East, there Mahometanism succeeded, and sprung out of it, to let all Christians see the horror of that heresy! And our Socinians, now among us, who call themselves Unitarians, are much more Mahometans than Christians. For except some personal things as to Mahomet, they agree almost wholly in his doctrine; and as such addressed themselves to the Morocco ambassador here in the reign of King Charles II. as you may see in the Preface to my Dialogues against the Socinians, printed in the year 1708. Nor do they speak more honourably of Christ and the Holy Scriptures than the Alcoran does: and there is no error concerning Christ in the Alcoran but what was broached before by the heretics of Christianity; as that Christ did not suffer really but in appearance only, or that some other was crucified in his stead, but he taken up into heaven, as the Alcoran speaks.

So that in strictness, I should not have reckoned Mahometanism as one of the four religions in the world, but as one of the heresies of Christianity. But because of its great name, and its having spread so far in the world, by the conquests of Mahomet and his followers, and that

it is vulgarly understood to be a distinct religion by itself, therefore I have considered it as such.

And as to your concern in the matter, you see plainly, that the Alcoran comes in attestation and confirmation of the facts of Christ, and of the Holy Scriptures.

DE. I am not come yet so far as to enter into the disputes of the several sects of Christianity, but as to the fact of Christ and of the Scriptures in general, Mahometanism I see does rather confirm than oppose it.

CHR. What then do you think of Judaism, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity?

DE. Not only as without any evidence, the time prophesied of for the coming of the Messiah being long since past: but all their former evidences turn directly against them, and against any Messiah who ever hereafter should come. As that the scepter should not depart from Judah; that he should come into the second temple; that the sacrifices should cease soon after his death; that David should never want a son to sit upon his throne; that they should be many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, &c. which they do not suppose ever will be the case after their Messiah is come. So that they are witnesses against themselves.

CHR.

CHR. And what do you think of the stories of the Heathen gods?

DE. I believe them no more than all the stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Nor did the wiser Heathens believe them, only such silly people as suck in all the Popish legends without examining.

And to tell you the truth, I thought the same of all your stories in the Bible; but I will take time to examine those proofs you have given me.

For we Deists do not dispute against Christianity, in behalf of any other religion of the Jews, or Heathens, or Mahometans, all which pretend to revelation; but we are against all revelation; and go only upon bare nature, and what our own reason dictates to us.

(1.) CHR. What nature dictates, it dictates to all, at least to the most and the generality of mankind; and if we measure by this, then it will appear a natural notion, that there is necessity of a revelation in religion: and herein you have all the world against you from the very beginning. And will you plead nature against all these?

DE. The notion came down from one to another, from the beginning, we know not how.

CHR. Then it was either nature from the beginning, or else it was from revelation at the be-

ginning; whence the notion has descended through all posterities to this day.

(2.) And there wants no reason for this: for when man had fallen and his reason was corrupted (as we feel it upon us to this day, as sensibly as the diseases and infirmities of the body) was it not highly reasonable that God should give us a law and directions how to serve and worship him? Sacrifices do not seem to be any natural invention: for why should taking away the life of my fellow-creature be acceptable to God, or a worship of him? It would rather seem an offence against him. But as types of the great and only propitiatory sacrifice of Christ to come, and to keep up our faith in that, the institution given with the revelation of it appears most rational. And that it was necessary, the great defection shews, not only of the Heathens, but of the Jews themselves, who, though they retained the institution, yet, in a great measure, lost the true meaning and signification of it; and are now to be brought back to it, by reminding them of the institution and the reason of it.

Plato in his *Alcibiad. ii. de Precat.* has the same reasoning, and concludes, that we cannot know of ourselves what petitions will be pleasing to God, or what worship to give him: but that it is necessary a lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us; and such a one he did expect;

expect; and “O how greatly do I desire to see that man?” says he, and “who he is?” The primitive tradition of the expected Messiah had no doubt come to him, as to many others of the Heathens, from the Jews, and likely from the perusal of their Scriptures.

For Plato goes further, and says, (de Leg. l. 4.) that this lawgiver must be more than man; for he observes, that every nature is governed by another nature that is superior to it, as birds and beasts by man, who is of a distinct and superior nature. So he infers, that this lawgiver, who was to teach man what man could not know by his own nature, must be of a nature that is superior to man, that is, of a divine nature.

Nay, he gives as lively a description of the person, qualifications, life, and death of this divine man, as if he had copied the liiid. of Isaiah: for he says, (de Repub. 1, 2.) that this just person must be poor and void of all recommendations but that of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproof, and therefore, within three or four years after he began to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last put to death; his word is *Ἀναχινδύλει θήσεται*, that is, cut in pieces, as they cut their sacrifices.

DE. These are remarkable passages as you

apply them; and Plato was three hundred years before Christ.

But I incline to think that these notions came rather from such tradition as you speak of, than from nature; and I can see nothing of nature in sacrifices, they look more like institution, come that how it will.

(3.) CHR. It is strange that all the nations in the world should be carried away from what you call nature; unless you will take refuge among the Hottentots at the Cape of Good Hope, hardly distinguishable from beasts, to shew us what nature left to itself would do! and leave us all the wise and polite world on the side of revelation, either real or pretended; and of opinion that mankind could not be without it: and my business now with you has been to distinguish the real from the pretended.

(4.) DE. By the account you have given, there is but one religion in the world, nor ever was: for the Jewish was but Christianity in type, though in time greatly corrupted: and the Heathen was a greater corruption, and founded the fables of their gods upon the facts of Scripture: and the Mahometan you say is but a heresy of Christianity. So that all is Christianity still.

CHR. It is true God gave but one revelation to the world, which was that of Christ: and as that was corrupted, new revelations were pretended.



tended. But God has guarded his revelations with such evidences, as it was not in the power of men or devils to counterfeit or contrive any thing like them. Some bear resemblance in one or two features, in the first two or three evidences that I have produced; but as none reach the fourth, so they are all quite destitute of the least pretence to the remaining four. So that when you look upon the face of divine revelation, and take it altogether, it is impossible to mistake it for any of those delusions which the devil has set up in imitation of it. And they are made to confirm it, because all the resemblance they have to truth, is that wherein they are any ways like it, but when compared with it, they shew, as an ill drawn picture, half man half beast, in presence of the beautiful original.

(5.) DE. It is strange, that if the case be thus plain as you have made it, the whole world is not immediately convinced.

CHR. If the seed be never so good, yet if it be sown upon stones or among thorns, it will bring forth nothing. There are hearts of stone, and others so filled with the love of riches, with the cares and pleasures of this life, that they will not see, they have not a mind to know any thing which they think would disturb them in their enjoyments, or lessen their opinion of them, for that would be taking away so much of their

pleasure; therefore it is no easy matter to persuade men to place their happiness in future expectations, which is the import of the Gospel. And in pressing this, and bidding the worldly-minded abandon their beloved vices, and telling the fatal consequences of them, we must expect to meet not only with their scorn and contempt, but their utmost rage and impatience, to get rid of us, as so many enemies of their lusts and pleasures. This is the cross which our Saviour prepared all his disciples to bear, who were to fight against flesh and blood, and all the allurements of the world; and it is a greater miracle that they have had so many followers in this, than that they have gained to themselves so many enemies. The world is a strong man, and till a stronger than he come (that is, the full persuasion of the future state) he will keep possession. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. But we are told also that this faith is the gift of God; for all the evidence in the world will not reach the heart, unless it be prepared (like the good ground) to receive the doctrine that is taught. Till then prejudice will create obstinacy, which will harden the heart like a rock, and cry, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris!* “I will not be persuaded, though I should be persuaded!”

You must consider under this head, too, the  
many

many that have not yet heard of the Gospel: and of those that have, the far greater number who have not the capacity or opportunity to examine all the evidences of Christianity, but take things upon trust, just as they are taught. And how many others are careless, and will not be at the pains, though they want not capacity to enquire into the truth? All these classes will include the greatest part of mankind. The ignorant, the careless, the vicious, and so the obstinate, the ambitious, and the covetous, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded.

But yet in the midst of all this darkness, God hath not left himself without witness, which will be apparent to every diligent and sober enquirer that is willing and prepared to receive the truth.

(6.) Good Sir, let me ask you, though you are of no religion, as you say, but what you call natural; yet would you not think me very brutal, if I should deny that ever there was such a man as Alexander, or Cæsar, or that they did such things? If I should deny all history, or that Homer, or Virgil, Demosthenes, or Cicero, ever wrote such books? Would you not think me perfectly obstinate, seized with a spirit of contradiction, and not fit for human conversation?

And yet these things are of no consequence to

me, it is not a farthing as to my interest, whether they are true or false.

Will you then think yourself a reasonable man, if, in matters of the greatest importance, even your eternal state, you will not believe those facts which have a thousand times more certain and indisputable evidence? Were there any prophecies of Cæsar and Pompey? Were there any types of them, or public institutions appointed by a law, to prefigure the great things that they should do? Any persons who went before them, to bear a resemblance of these things, and bid us expect that great event? Was there a general expectation in the world of their coming, before or at the time when they came? And of what consequence was their coming to the world, or to after ages? No more than a robbery committed a thousand years ago!

Were the Greek and Roman histories wrote by the persons who did the facts, or by eye-witnesses? And for the greater certainty were those histories made the standing law of the country? Or were they any more than our Holinshed and Stow, &c.?

Must we believe these, on pain of not being thought reasonable men? And are we then unreasonable and credulous, if we believe the facts of the Holy Bible! which was the standing law of the people to whom it was given, and wrote  
or

or dictated by those who did the facts, with public institutions appointed by them as a perpetual law to all their generations; and which, if the facts had been false, could never have passed at the time when the facts were said to be done: nor for the same reason, if that book had been wrote afterwards; because these institutions (as circumcision, the passover, baptism, &c.) were as notorious facts as any; and that book saying they commenced from the time that the facts were done, must be found to be false, whenever it was trumped up in after ages, by no such institutions being then known. Not like the feasts, games, &c. in memory of the Heathen gods, which were appointed long after those facts were said to be done: and the like institutions may be appointed to-morrow in memory of any falsehood said to be done a thousand years ago; and so is no proof at all. And though a legend, or book of stories of things said to be done many years past, may be palmed upon people, yet a book of statutes cannot, by which their causes are tried every day.

Are there such prophecies extant in any profane history so long before the facts there recorded, as there are in the Holy Scriptures of the coming of the Messiah?

Were there any types or forerunners of the Heathen Gods, or Mahomet?

Is there the like evidence of the truth and sincerity of the Greek and Roman historians, as of the penmen of the Holy Scriptures?

Would these historians have given their lives for the truth of all they wrote?

Did they tell such facts only, wherein it was impossible for themselves to be imposed upon, or that they should impose upon others? Nothing but what themselves had seen and heard, and they also to whom they spoke?

Did they expect nothing but persecution and death for what they related? And were they bidden to bare it patiently without resistance? Was this the case of the disciples of Mahomet, who were required to fight and conquer with the sword?

Did any religion ever overcome by suffering, but the Christian only?

And did any exhibit the future state, and preach the contempt of this world like the Christian?

DE. That is the reason it has prevailed so little. And yet, considering this, it is strange it has prevailed so much.

(7.) But there is one thing yet behind, wherein I would be glad to have your opinion, because I find your Divines differ about it; and that is, how we shall know to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles.

And this is necessary to the subject we are  
upon.



upon. For the force of the facts you allege ends all in this, that such miraculous facts are a sufficient attestation of such persons being sent of God; and consequently, that we are to believe the doctrine which they taught.

You know we Deists deny any such thing as miracles, but reduce all to nature; yet I confess, if I had seen such miracles as are recorded of Moses and of Christ, it would have convinced me. And for the truth of them we must refer to the evidences you have given. But in the mean time, if there is no rule whereby to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles, there is an end of all the pains you have taken. For if the devil can work such things, as appear miracles to me, I am as much persuaded as if they were true miracles, and wrought by God. And so men may be deceived in trusting to miracles.

The common notion of a miracle is what exceeds the power of nature. To which we say, that we know not the utmost of the power of nature, and consequently cannot tell what exceeds it. Nor do you pretend to know the utmost of the power of spirits, whether good or evil, and how then can you tell what exceeds their power?

I doubt not but you would have thought those to be true miracles which the magicians are  
said

said to have wrought in Egypt, but that Moses is said to have wrought miracles that were superior to them.

CHR. Therefore if two persons contend for the superiority, as here God and the Devil did, the best issue can be is to see them wrestle together, and then we shall soon know which is the strongest. This was the case of Moses and the magicians, of Christ and the Devil. There was a struggle, and Satan was plainly overcome.

I confess I know not the power of spirits, nor how they work upon bodies. And by the same reason that a spirit can lift a straw, he may a mountain, and the whole earth, for aught I know; and may do many things which would appear true miracles to me, and so might deceive me. And all I have to trust to in this case is the restraining power of God, that he will not permit the devil so to do. And were it not for this, I doubt not but the devil could take away my life in an instant, or inflict terrible diseases upon me, as upon Job.

And I think this consideration is the strongest motive in the world to keep us in a constant dependence upon God, that we may live in the midst of such powerful enemies as we can by no means resist of ourselves, and are in their power every

every minute, when God shall withdraw his protection from us.

And it is in their power likewise to work signs and wonders to deceive us, if God permit.—And herein the great power and goodness of God is manifest, that he has never yet permitted the devil to work miracles in opposition to any whom he sent, except where the remedy was at hand, and to shew his power the more, as in the case of Moses and the magicians, &c.

And this is further evident, because God has, at other times, and upon other occasions, suffered the devil to exert his power, as to make fire descend upon Job's cattle, &c. But here was no cause of religion concerned, nor any truth of God in debate.

DE. But your Christ has foretold, Matt. xxiv. 24, that false Christs and false prophets shall arise, who shall shew great signs and wonders, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. And it is said, 2 Theff. ii. 9, that there shall be a wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and it is supposed, Deut. xiii. 1, &c. that a false prophet may give a sign or a wonder, to draw men after false gods. Here then is sign against sign, and wonder against wonder, and which of these shall we believe?

CHR. The first no doubt. For God cannot contradict himself, nor will shew signs and wonders in opposition to that law which he has established by so many signs and wonders. Therefore, in such a case, we must conclude, that God has permitted the devil to exert his power, as against Moses and Christ, for the trial of our faith, and to shew the superior power of God more eminently, in overcoming all the power of the enemy.

But, as I said before, we have a more sure word, that is, proof, than even these miracles exhibited to our outward senses, which is the word of prophecy. Let, then, any false Christ who shall pretend to come hereafter, shew such a book as our Bible, which has been so long in the world (the most ancient book now extant) testifying of him, foretelling the time, and all other circumstances of his coming, with his sufferings and death, and all these prophecies exactly fulfilled in him. And till he can do this, he cannot have that evidence which our Christ has, and he must be a false Christ to me, and all the signs that he can shew, will be but lying wonders to any that is truly established in the Christian faith.

But it may be a trial too strong for those careless ones who will not be at the pains to enquire into the grounds of their religion, but take  
it

it upon trust, as they do the fashions, and mind not to frame their lives according to it, but are immersed in the world, and the pleasures of it.

(8.) And it will be a just judgment upon these, that they who shut their eyes against all the clear evidences of the Gospel, should be given up to believe a lye. And the reason is given 2 Theff. ii. 12, because they “had pleasure in unrighteousness.” They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

So that I must repeat what I said before, that there is a preparation of the heart (as of the ground) to receive the truth. And where the doctrine does not please, no evidence, how clear soever, will be received. God cannot enter till mammon be dispossessed. We cannot serve these two masters. He who has a clear sight of heaven, cannot value the dull pleasures of this life; and it is impossible that he who is drowned in sense can relish spiritual things. The love of this world is enmity against God. The first sin was a temptation of sense; and the reparation is to open our eyes to the enjoyment of God. Vice clouds this eye, and makes it blind to the only true and eternal pleasure. It is foolishness to such a one.

This,

This, this Sir, is the *remora* that keeps men from Christianity. It is not want of evidence, but it is want of consideration. I would not say this to you till I had first gone through all the topics of reason with you, that you might not call it cant. But this is the truth. As David says, “To him that ordereth his conversation  
 “ aright, will I shew the salvation of God.” And our Saviour says, “If any man do the will  
 “ of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whe-  
 “ ther it be of God, or whether I speak of my-  
 “ self.” And “No man can come unto me,  
 “ except the Father draw him.”

This was the reason why St. John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner to prepare the way for Christ, by preaching of repentance, to fit men for receiving the Gospel.

And they who repented of their sins upon his preaching, did gladly embrace the doctrine of Christ. But they who would not forsake their sins remained obdurate, though otherwise men of sense and learning. As our Saviour told the Priests and Elders, Matt. xxi. 31. “John came  
 “ unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye  
 “ believed him not; but the publicans and the  
 “ harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had  
 “ seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might  
 “ believe him.”

And



And when Christ fought to prepare them for his doctrine, by telling them, that they could not serve God and mammon, it is said, Luke xvi. 14. "That when the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard these things, they derided him." But he instructed them in the next verse, (if they would have received it) that "what is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God." And enforced this with the example of the Rich Man and Lazarus. And said, chap. xvii. 25, "That it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And chap. xiv. 33, "That whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Now take this in the largest sense, that he who is not ready and willing to forsake all, as if he hated them, as Christ said, verse 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother," &c. (that is, when they come in competition with any command of Christ) and "take not his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple." How few disciples would he have had in this age! Would all his miracles persuade some to this! The world is too hard for heaven with most men!

Here is the cause of infidelity. The love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes,

eyes, and the pride of life, darken the heart, and, like shutters, keep out the light of heaven ; till they are removed, the light cannot enter. The spirit of purity and holiness will not descend into an heart full of all uncleanness. If we would invite this guest, we must sweep the house and make it clean.

But this too is of God ; for he only can make a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. But he has promised to give this wisdom to those who ask it, and lead a godly life. Therefore ask, and you shall have, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. But do it ardently and incessantly, as he that striveth for his soul. For God is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness : and those who come to him in sincerity, he will in no wise cast out. Therefore pray in faith, nothing doubting ; and what you pray for, (according to his will) believe that you receive it, and you shall receive it.

To his grace I commend you.

(9.) And with the fulness of the Gentiles, O ! that it would please God to take the veil off the heart of the Jews, and let them see that they have been deceived by many false Messiahs, since Christ came ; so none whom they expect hereafter, can answer the prophecies of the Messiah, (some of which I have named) and therefore

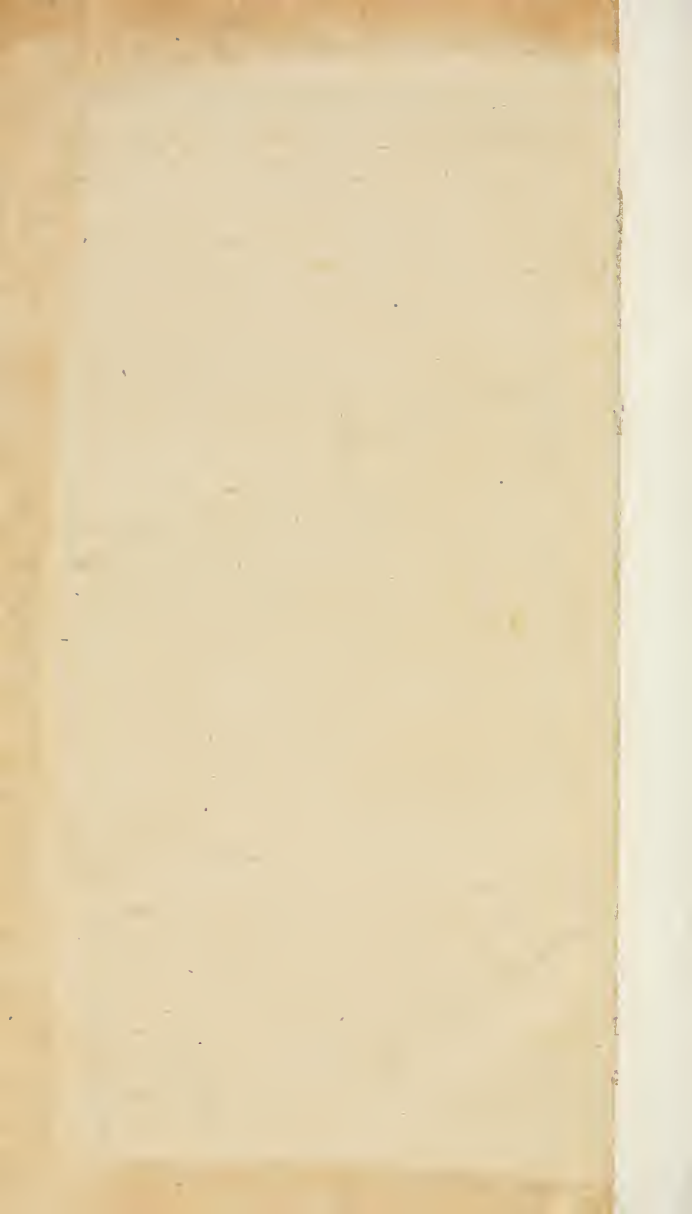
fore no such can be the Messiah who is prophesied of in their own Scriptures.

And let them see and consider how that fatal curse they imprecated upon themselves, “ His blood be upon us and on our children,” has cleaved unto them, beyond all their former sins, and even repeated idolatry, from which (to shew that is not the cause of their present dispersion) they have kept themselves free ever since ; and for which their longest captivity was but seventy years, and then prophets were sent to them to comfort them, and assure them of a restoration : but now they have been about seventeen hundred years dispersed over all the earth, without any prophet, or prospect of their deliverance ; that the whole world might take notice of this before unparalleled judgment not known to any nation that ever yet was upon the face of the earth ! So punished, and so preserved for judgment, and I hope, at last, for a more wonderful mercy !—  
“ For, if the casting away of them be the re-  
“ conciling of the world, what shall the re-  
“ ceiving of them be, but life from the dead ?  
“ For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that  
“ he might have mercy upon all. O the depth  
“ of the riches both of the wisdom and know-  
“ ledge of God ! How unsearchable are his  
“ judgments, and his ways past finding out !  
“ For

“ For of him, and through him, and to him,  
“ are all things. To whom be glory for ever.  
“ Amen.”

FINIS.







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